



You Are Mine
Leader's Bible Study Guide
***and* Bible Study Workbook**
(A companion to the YAM Master Curriculum Guide)

"You are important not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are."

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You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Foreword YAM Bible Study

In this YAM Bible Study, we are delighted to explore the Biblical basis for each of the lesson objectives in the Master Curriculum Guide. We are especially delighted to explore the overarching theme of You Are Mine which is *we are important not because what we have but because of who(se) we are*. That is to say, we are children of God and we belong to Him.

Every individual from every walk of life has intrinsic value because all are made in the very image and likeness of God. As image bearers, each person holds a special place in God's Creation, no matter how marred that image may be. For that reason, New Song can wholeheartedly declare that each person is "special: unique, important, and created for a purpose." This is the foundation of our flagship You Are Special program.

We know that God personally loves every individual. However, many don't know this love or enjoy a relationship with their heavenly Father and Creator. This is because of The Fall and its subsequent impact on all Creation. The Fall resulted in our broken world and sinful nature that have left us dead in our trespasses. Amazingly, God seeks us in our brokenness and sin, even when we don't know to seek Him! Once we accept the provision of Jesus, His sacrifice and resurrection, we are moved from death to life and our relationship as God's child is fully restored.

This reality is not simply about confused people finally understanding who they are and to whom they belong. This is about people dead in their sin being made alive through Christ and, from that place, understanding their identity and position as a child of God.

The You Are Mine Bible Study addresses the human longing to know who we are and to whom we belong within the context of God's Kingdom and this material world. It is from this framework that this study explores the concepts of generosity, stewardship, and our place in the big picture.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

New Song Programs Overview

Master Curriculum Overview	You Are Special (YAS)	Be Yourself! (BY!)	You Are Mine (YAM)
Topics	Self-worth and resisting labels	Identity and combating negative peer pressure	Our importance, materialism and proper stewardship
Enduring Understanding (main take-away for end-user)	You are special - unique, important, created for a purpose!	Embrace whom you are uniquely created to be!	You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.
Companion book by Max Lucado (bilingual edition)	<u>You Are Special</u>	<u>If Only I Had a Green Nose</u>	<u>You Are Mine</u>
Targeted Grade/Ages*	5 th grade (expanded use to 8-12 year olds)	6 th grade (expanded use to 12-14 year olds)	7 th grade (expanded use to 14-16 year olds)
Lesson Times* (for end-user)	School Day Curriculum (SDC) of 8, 1-hour lessons; Saturday Curriculum (SC) of 4, 2-hour lessons	5, 1.5 hour lessons	5, 1.5 hour lessons and 1-1.5 hours of extended learning
Additional Biblical Resources (for use in "open" settings)	YAS Companion Bible Study, essay on self worth	BY! Companion Bible Study, essay on self worth	YAM Companion Bible Study, essay on self worth
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All programs work as seed planting with unbelievers. • All programs work as a discipleship tools when in coordination with Bible Study. • YAS is foundational to BY! and YAM but they can be implemented as "stand-alones". • Because of the depth and nature of BY!/YAM, they require more time for lesson exploration and can be less versatile. 		
*Please note that lesson times and age ranges are adaptable			

New Song Programs Biblical Framework

This is basic foundation on which we base all New Song curricula and Bible studies.

- 1) Everyone is special.
- 2) Everyone is special because they are made by God.
- 3) Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God.
- 4) Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God so that they can be secure in God.
- 5) Everyone is special because they are made by God because they are loved by God so that through Christ they can be secure in God and share this message with others.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

You Are Special (YAS) Overview

Publisher's Description of You Are Special by Max Lucado:

"Every day Wemmicks do the same thing: either stick gold stars or gray dots on one another. The pretty and talented ones always get stars. Others, though, who can do little or who have chipped paint, get ugly dots. Kids will love seeing how Eli the woodcarver helps Punchinello understand how special he is--dots and all. Parents will appreciate the message this story sends to kids: that regardless of what the world thinks, they are precious in God's sight."

Enduring Understanding:

You are special - unique, important, created for a purpose!

MCG Lesson Objectives with Bible Study Key Scriptures:

Lesson 0

The participant will see the relationship between esteeming God and understanding his/her self-worth as well as hear the salvation message.

Key Scripture: Psalm 96:2

Lesson 1

The participant will state the theme of the book as "you are special".

Key Scripture: 1 John 4:8b

Lesson 2

The participant will define "special."

Key Scripture: Genesis 1:26

Lesson 3

The participant will recognize his/herself and others as special through acknowledging similarities and appreciating differences.

Key Scripture: 1 Samuel 16:7b

Lesson 4

The participant will know they are special by identifying and explaining traits that show that they were made that way.

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:10

Lesson 5

The participant will explain the symbolism of stars and dots.

Key Scripture: Matthew 7:1

Lesson 6

The participant will understand that it is a choice to accept stars and dots, and that the best choice is to accept neither.

Key Scripture: 2 Corinthians 3:18

Lesson 7

The participant will demonstrate understanding of the importance of sharing the good news of the YAS message by helping others know they are special.

Key Scripture: Romans 10:14

Lesson 8

The participant will celebrate his/her specialness and the specialness of others.

Key Scripture: Romans 12:10

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Be Yourself! (BY!) Overview

Publisher's Description of If Only I Had a Green Nose by Max Lucado:

"Just like Punchinello, we all want to fit in. To be accepted by the crowd. But at times that may mean we either have to look and act like others, or risk being rejected. Punchinello's hard-earned lesson shows us how important it is to be who we were created to be, and why that matters. So let this wonderful tale help you remember two things: that you were made unique for a reason, and that there is one who will always help you be you--wonderfully you."

Enduring Understanding:

Embrace whom you are uniquely created to be.

MCG Lesson Objectives with Bible Study Key Scriptures:

Lesson 1

The participant will read and discuss If Only I Had a Green Nose by Max Lucado, be introduced to the theme of the Be Yourself! program, and learn to recognize their own uniqueness and that of others.

Key Scripture: Psalm 139: 13-16

Lesson 2

The participant will define "peer pressure" and identify types of positive and negative peer pressure.

Key Scripture: Romans 12:2

Lesson 3

The participant will identify reasons he/she might give in to negative pressures as well as become aware of tricks of advertisers.

Key Scripture: 1 John 2:15-17

Lesson 4

The participant will examine the negative consequences of giving in to peer pressure.

Key Scripture: Galatians 6:7

Lesson 5

The participant will practice ways to resist negative peer pressure and personally apply concepts of Be Yourself!

Key Scripture: 1 Corinthians 10:13

Bonus Bible Study Lesson

The participant will explore the difference between being a "Lover of Self" and "Loving Yourself."

Key Scripture: Matthew 22:39

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You Are Mine (YAM) Overview

***Publisher's Description* You Are Mine by Max Lucado:**

"It's a new day in Wemmickville for the enchanting wooden people, and there's a new problem for the little Wemmick named Punchinello. The Wemmicks compete with each other to collect the most--and the nicest--boxes and balls in order to appear more "important" than others, which means that, once again, there is havoc in the village. And once again, Punchinello is caught in the middle. But in the end, there's a message that kids need and parents will love: God's children are loved because He made them. They do not have to collect "things" to compete for status in His eyes. With the warm illustrations of artist Sergio Martinez, this new sequel to the phenomenal bestseller You Are Special is sure to become a classic in its own right."

Enduring Understanding:

You are important, not because of what you have, but because of who(se) you are.

MCG Lesson Objectives with Bible Study Key Scriptures:

Lesson 0

The Participant will hear a clear presentation of the gospel message.

Essential Question: How is it possible to have a close relationship with God?

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-13

Lesson 1

The participant will be introduced to the theme of the You Are Mine program.

Essential Question: Is wanting wrong?

Key Scripture: Matthew 6:21

Lesson 2

The participant will examine the notion of success and the price he/she is willing to pay to feel important.

Essential Question: When is the cost of success too high?

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:28

Lesson 3

The participant will determine if their actions reflect their core values.

Essential Question: What defines you?

Key Scripture: Hebrews 10:14

Lesson 4

The participant will explore generosity and its relationship to happiness.

Essential Question: Am I a bucket or a pipe?

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:24

Lesson 5

The participant will define "stewardship" and examine what it means to properly steward their time, talent and material resources.

Essential Question: What is proper stewardship?

Key Scripture: Psalm 24:1

Extended Learning

The participant will consider the impact of consumerism.

Essential Question: How can I make a difference?

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:10

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Introduction to Use

The You Are Mine (YAM) Master Curriculum Guide (MCG) explores the truth, "We are important not because of what we have but because of who(se) we are." These lessons are designed for youth ages 14-16 and touch on the following:

- Jealousy and greed as destructive behaviors that are often attempts to satisfy a need to feel important
- The cost to one's mind/body/soul when they seek importance from the wrong things
- The need for a person's actions to reflect their core values
- Giving as a key to happiness, and the reality that each individual always has something to give
- Love as the best motivation for properly stewarding one's resources
- Knowing each person is a valuable part of something bigger than themselves

This YAM Bible Study can be done simultaneously with the MCG or following it. Each MCG lesson takes about 1.5 hours. Each Bible Study lesson takes about 1.5 hours and includes portions of the MCG that may have been modified to convey the Biblical perspective (except for Lesson 0 which can only be found in the Bible Study). Lesson 0 should be understood as a non-negotiable precursor to the subsequent lessons because it outlines the starting point for all Christian learning and growth, the provision of Jesus through the Cross. It may not always be feasible or practical to use the full MCG and the Bible Study together. Other options can be:

Alternative Option 1: Leaders use the Master Curriculum Guide only and have participants memorize the lesson's Key Scripture in order to build the Biblical foundation for each lesson. However, **Lesson 0 is a non-negotiable** precursor for all believers. It can't be stressed enough that every leader/instructor should read through the entire Bible Study before implementing the Master Curriculum in order to grasp the Biblical basis for each lesson.

Alternative Option 2: Leaders use Bible Study only without full implementation of MCG. The Bible Study incorporates portions from the MCG. However, the Bible Study cannot be implemented without knowledge of some of the main concepts and lessons in the MCG. These lessons should be included where indicated with an asterisk*. It is recommended that the leader/instructor read through the entire MCG before doing the Bible Study.

Note: A companion BY! Bible Study Workbook has been created that allows participants to complete the exercises in a personal workbook. Handouts for classroom use can be found in the Appendix for those not using the YAM Bible Study Workbook. They can be copied from the printed curriculum guide or from the digital version. If printing the YAM Bible Study Workbook is impractical, participants can do the exercises in a regular notebook with some simple instruction from the leader
New Song Programs Overview.

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You Are Mine (YAM) Leader's Bible Study Guide
(A companion to the YAM Master Curriculum Guide)

"You are important not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are."

Lesson 0

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-13

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked ... But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ...(abbreviated).

Essential Question: How is it possible to have a close relationship with God?

Objective:

The participant will hear a clear presentation of the gospel message.

Materials:

- *You Are Mine storybook (1 per participant)
- Bible Study Workbook (1 per participant)
- Roll of masking tape or chalk, permanent marker
- A length of red fabric longer than 2 meters
- One piece per participant of black ribbon/black string in varying lengths but no longer than 1.5 meters
- Small paper squares, pencils, and cellophane tape

Participants will use their YAM Bible Study Workbook throughout this study and should be reminded to bring it with them every day.

Leader instructs participants to open to the very first page of his/her Workbook and fill in his/her name under the title:

YOU ARE MINE BIBLE STUDY

(Add your name and date.)

"You are important not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are."

Introduction (10 min.):

The leader should refer to the storybook You Are Mine during the Bible Study. (If participants have not received a book yet, leader should be sure to give them one before Lesson 1). The leader makes the following points: The two main characters of this book are Eli and Punchinello. As readers one quickly comes to see that Eli represents God and Punchinello represents each person, humanity. The most important lesson for Punchinello to learn was to be assured of Eli's love and to trust Eli for his happiness. Punchinello came to understand that he is important not for what he has, but for *who* and *whose* he is. In the same way, each individual can be assured of God's love and learn to trust God for their happiness. Like Punchinello, each person will come to know that they are important not for what they have but because of *who* and *whose* they are. It's vital to note that the only way Punchinello could learn this lesson was to be in a close relationship with Eli. The same is true for each person in his or her relationship with God. How is it possible to have a close relationship with God?

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Bible Study (60 min.):

Leader directs participants in the C.O.M.A. method of Scripture study using the headings: CONTEXT, OBSERVATION, MEANING, APPLICATION (See Appendix).

Participants can do the following exercise in groups of 4-5. Someone in the group begins by reading aloud **Ephesians 2:1-13**. After reading the verse, participants are to discuss the following C.O.M.A. questions under each section: Context, Observation and Meaning. Then they will write their answers in their Workbook under the appropriate section.

Ephesians 2:1-13

*And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Note to leader: The **APPLICATION** portion of C.O.M.A. will be covered later after the object lessons. When participants complete this exercise they should be prepared to share with the larger group.*

CONTEXT

Leader asks what is the context of this passage? Participants are directed to find this out by answering a few questions:

Who wrote this scripture? (*Paul*)

Who is the intended audience? (*Gentile believers in the church in Ephesus*)

Why was this written? (*To show how salvation impacts one's relationship with God and others and the greater purpose of the Church*)

OBSERVATION

Leader asks, "What are some of the things you can observe about the writing?"

Participants are instructed to look for some of these things:

Are there any phrases or words that stand out or are repeated? (*"Dead in our trespasses/sin", "by grace you have been saved", "Christ Jesus", "works"*)

What are the main points the text is making? (*We are dead in our sin and saved by grace through faith, not by works.*)

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

MEANING

Leader will ask what this text means and explain it is pointless to read scripture if one doesn't wrestle with what it actually means. All of scripture is written to reveal to individuals who God is so that they may know Him and enjoy Him. Next, leader will ask what this passage teaches about God? (*God loves each individual and provides salvation.*)

Leader will ask what this passage teaches a person about himself or herself? (*One is not just sinful; one is dead in their sin, and they cannot save themselves from this state of being; each person needs a Savior/Messiah/Christ.*)

Finally, leader will ask what this passage teaches individuals about having a close relationship with God? (*That it's only by the blood of Christ. See v. 13*)

After participants complete the "C", "O", and "M" sections in small groups, the leader should have them come back to the large group to discuss the answers. Leader should make sure the answers in parentheses above are brought out in this discussion.

Leader demonstrates the following object lessons:

Object Lessons

1) Faith - Chair Exercise

Leader refers to the definition of "Faith" in the participant's Workbook under Lesson 0: Faith is "complete trust or confidence in someone or something."¹

Leader places a chair in the front of the classroom and directs the object lesson as follows: "Who has faith that this chair will hold them? Can I have a volunteer come forward and demonstrate their faith?" (A participant will come up, and leader should make sure they put all of their weight in the chair.)

Leader emphasizes that the participant's demonstration of faith was not a matter of talking about the chair and its sound structure, or even saying they had faith in the chair, or simply touching or leaning on the chair. To demonstrate real faith, the participant had to put their *full weight* in the chair.

Leader concludes: "How does this relate to salvation? It's not enough to talk about Jesus as Savior or to be impressed with His goodness, wisdom, or healing power. It's not even enough to go to church or do good things for God. That's like polishing the chair while not putting your full trust in it. Faith is putting your whole trust in the provision of Jesus for your assurance of salvation both for now and for all eternity."

¹ "Faith", Oxford Dictionary. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/faith>

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Leader will have a participant read aloud **Romans 10:9**.

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

The leader will give participants time to make notes or draw this object lesson in their Workbook.

2) Grace - Free Gift vs. Deserved Wage

Leader hands out to each participant two pictures: one of a wrapped present that represents a Free Gift and one picture of a hammer that represents a Deserved Wage. (The images can be copied from handout in Appendix.) Leader will read the scenarios listed below, and ask participants to hold up the picture that they feel best represents the scenario. They should discuss any differences of opinion as they arise.

You receive an "A" grade on the test for which you studied many hours. (DW)

Your mom gives you a new pair of Nikes for Christmas. (FG)

Your boss hands you your salary at the end of the week. (DW)

You're Taobao's 1 millionth customer and win a 500RMB coupon. (FG)

Your uncle gives you a new iPhone 7 for no reason. (FG)

Your dad gives you money for completing your household chores. (DW)

You're promoted to Lead Sunday School Teacher after two years of being an assistant. (DW)

You were late to school, but your teacher didn't give you a demerit. (FG)

You're bumped up to a soft sleeper for your 12-hour train trip when you only paid for a hard seat. (FG)

Your waitress brings you an extra portion of dumplings compliments of the chef. (FG)

Leader concludes by stating, "You cannot and did not earn your salvation. Grace is a free gift, not a deserved wage."

Leader has a participant read aloud **Ephesians 2:8-9**.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Participants should make notes or draw this object lesson in their Workbook.

3) Not by Works - The Bridge to Life

Before class, the leader should draw two parallel lines on the floor with tape (or chalk) with a gap between them about 2 meters wide. With a marker (or chalk), one line should be labeled as GOD and the other line as HUMANITY. On a piece of paper SIN is written and put in the gap between the two lines. Small slips of paper, tape, and string of varying lengths should be passed out to each participant.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader instructs participants to use the slips of paper to write out as many good deeds as they can think of (i.e., giving to the needy, attending church, respecting elders) and attach to their string. Participants come up one at a time with their string and attach one end to the HUMANITY side and then stretch the string out toward the God side, trying to bridge the gap over sin. (Note: no one should be allowed to tie strings together to span the gap.)

Leader makes a point to show that no one's string reaches to the God line. This visual demonstration shows that no number of good works can create the necessary bridge needed to get close to God.

Next the leader takes the strip of red fabric and lays a line from the GOD side to the HUMANITY side attaching the fabric securely at each end.

Leader concludes, "This fabric represents the provision of Jesus, His death and resurrection. Jesus is the bridge between sinful humanity and a holy God. It is not by our works but by faith in HIS blood that brings us back to our original sinless state. Now, I want you all to walk across the red bridge (Jesus) to better understand the free gift of grace that allows us to have a close relationship with God."

A participant should read aloud **Ephesians 2:13**.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Participants should be allowed time to make notes or draw this object lesson in their Workbook.

APPLICATION

Leader instructs participants to complete the APPLICATION portion of the C.O.M.A. exercise started earlier by taking a few minutes now to write their response to **Ephesians 2:1-13** in their Workbook under APPLICATION.

Note to Leader: For the believer, the response will likely be an expression of gratitude for their salvation. For an unbeliever, there is a salvation invitation to accept or not. If anyone is ready to accept that invitation, let him or her know you are available after class to speak with him or her about the next step.

This is the starting point and foundation on which the YAM Bible lessons will be built going forward.

Scripture References

***Ephesians 2:1-13**

Romans 10:9

Lesson 1

Key Scripture: Mathew 6:21

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Essential Question: Is wanting wrong?

Key quote from the text: *"Don't you wish you had a new box?"*

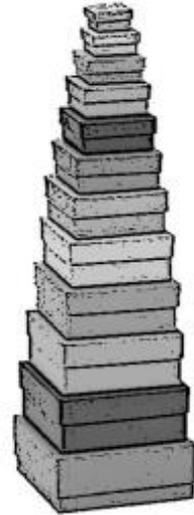
MCG Objective:

The participant will be introduced to the theme of the "You Are Mine" program.

Please refer to Lesson 1 of the YAM MCG.

Materials:

- You Are Mine by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Bible Study Workbook
- ***YAM MCG**



Note to Leader: Each Bible Study lesson takes about 1.5 hours and includes some activities from the MCG as indicated by the asterisk*. If more activities are desired in order to extend learning, refer to the MCG and pick from activities that best suit your time frame and focus, but **please be sure to do the activities marked with an asterisk* as part of the Bible Study where indicated.**

Introduction (15 min.):

Leader introduces the lesson by stating that the class will begin a Bible Study using the children's story called You Are Mine by Max Lucado. Leader asks how many have heard of You Are Special and if any participants experienced YAS programs, or are any familiar with any part of YAS. The leader will tell participants that You Are Mine focuses on the same character, Punchinello, and his village of Wemmicks, animated wooden puppets created by Eli, the carpenter. In this particular story, the author is trying to share an important realization about the meaning of success. Leader begins by first reading the story and then discussing some questions.

Leader reads You Are Mine out loud to the class.

Leader will discuss (or review) the following for understanding:

Who are the main characters?

What is the main plot and how is it resolved?

What is the moral of the story?

If you have read You Are Special or If Only I Had a Green Nose, how is this story similar? How is it different?

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Note to leader: If participants have done the *Guided Practice from the MCG earlier, refer them back to their answers and review.

***Guided Practice Lesson 1 (20 min.) Vocabulary Definitions:**

Leaders have participants find the page in their Workbook with the vocabulary words. They will write the definitions in their Workbook as Leader dictates them. They should answer the questions in their Workbook after each word. Upon completion of all the words, the answers should be discussed as a class without correcting participants' responses.

Vocabulary Definitions²

#1: Jealous (adj.) *is "an unhappy or angry feeling of wanting to have what someone else has."*

Leader asks without correcting answers:

What does feeling jealous tell us about ourselves?
Is it wrong to feel jealous?

Participants should finish the sentence in their Workbook:

I feel JEALOUS when _____.

Vocabulary Definitions

#2: Competitive (adj.) *is "having a strong desire to win or be the best at something."*

Leader asks without correcting answers:

Why is competition so much fun? Or is it?
What does how we relate to competition tell us about ourselves?
When is it OK to want to win, or be the best, and when is it not OK?

Participants should finish the sentence in their Workbook:

I feel COMPETITIVE when _____.

Vocabulary Definitions

#3: Greedy (adj.) *is "having or showing a selfish desire to have more of something (such as money or food): having greed."*

Leader asks without correcting answers:

Can you name a book or movie character that is greedy?
Is greedy a good feeling? Why or why not?
When do you feel greedy?

Participants should finish the sentence in their Workbook:

I feel GREEDY when _____.

² Definitions taken from Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>

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Bible Study (60 min.):

Leader will have participants explore what the Bible says about these three traits they just wrote in their Workbooks. Participants will work in small groups, find the page in their Workbook, read aloud the Scripture references, and use their own words to summarize the meaning for each verse. Then they are to create an emoji face for the trait next to the word.

1. Jealous (adj.) (Read the verses and then summarize.)

James 3:16 _____

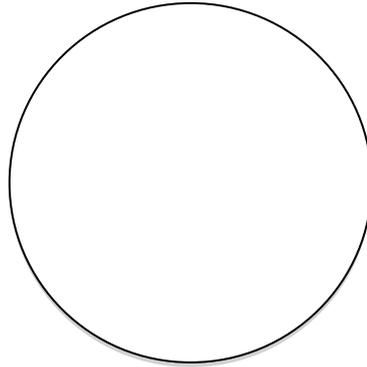
Galatians 5:19-21 _____

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 _____

If jealousy had an emoji face,

what would it look like?

Draw the emoji on this page.



2. Competitive (adj.) (Read the verses and then summarize.)

Philippians 2:3-4 _____

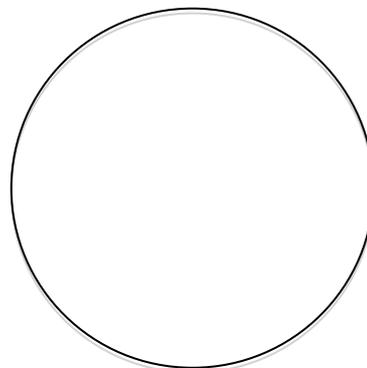
Galatians 6:4 _____

Colossians 3:23 _____

If competitive had an emoji face,

what would it look like?

Draw the emoji on this page.



You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

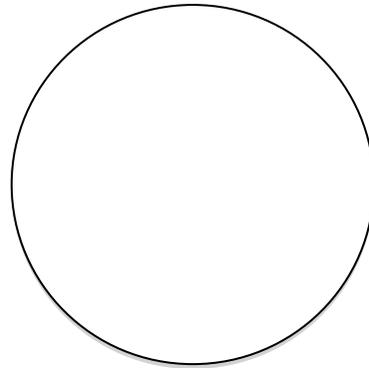
3. Greedy (adj.) (Read the verses and then summarize.)

1 Timothy 6:10 _____

Matthew 6:24 _____

Ecclesiastes 5:10 _____

If greedy had an emoji face,
what would it look like?
Draw the emoji on this page.



The participants should come back to the larger group and share their emojis.

Leader refers again to Punchinello and has the class discuss the following:
How did jealousy enter into the competition? (*Answer: It all started when he became jealous of Tuck's boxes. It grew into a driving force.*)

What do you think Punchinello was *actually* competing for in this story? (*Answer: He wanted to be and feel important.*)

How do we see Punch behaving in a *greedy* way? (*Answer: He was totally focused on what he wanted with no regard for others.*)

Leader notes: Exodus 20:17 states the last of the 10 Commandments is:

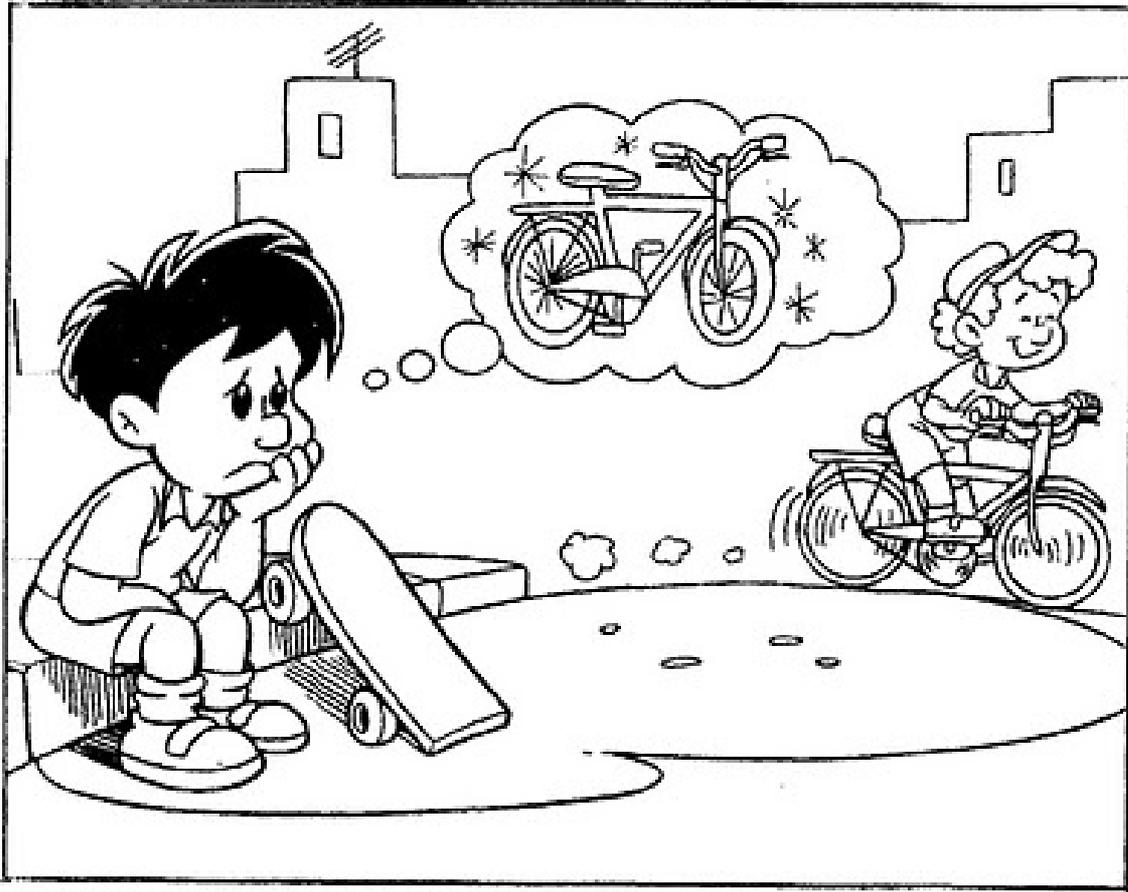
"Do not covet."

Participants will be instructed to write the definition of "covet" as leader reads it.
Covet means "*to feel inordinate desire for what belongs to another.*"³

³ Covet", Merriam Webster Dictionary. www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/covet

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader shows the cartoon and discusses how it relates to this topic.



Leader will ask, "How is coveting related to jealousy, competition, and greed? Participants will be told that coveting can be at the root of unhealthy competition, jealousy, and greed.

Leader asks, "Why is coveting a sin?"

Participants will refer to the cartoon page in their Workbook. They will form small groups of 4-5 participants and read through the Scriptures associated with each question. Then they should answer the following questions in their Workbooks:

What does coveting imply about our understanding of God? (Matthew 7:7-11; Heb. 13:5-6)

What attitudes are at the root of coveting? (Luke 17:11-19; 2 Tim. 3:1-4)

How is coveting idol worship? (Matthew 6:19-24; Ps 115:4-8)

How is coveting destructive to us? (James 3:14-16; 1 Tim. 6:9-10)

After the participants have finished this exercise, leader should bring them back to the large group and discuss their answers.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader explains, "Excessive focus on the accumulation of material possessions, especially as a measure of worth, is a poor substitute for real meaning and value. Furthermore, obsessive focus on material wealth is seriously rebuked in the Bible."

Leader selects a **participant to read Luke 12:15** out loud, *"And he said to them, 'Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.'"*

Leader Asks: But is wanting wrong? Can it be so bad to have material desires? What's wrong with wanting a new pair of shoes or a nice jacket? ...NOTHING!

Participants are instructed to listen carefully without looking at their Workbook as the leader reads out loud the verses below. The participants are instructed to **fill in the missing words in their Workbook** as they remember. Leader reads the verse one more time to allow participants to correct their answers.

1. Philippians 4:19 *"And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."*

"And my God will _____ need of yours according to _____ riches in glory in _____."

2. James 1:17 *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change."*

"Every _____ and every _____ gift is _____, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no _____ or _____ due to change."

3. Matthew 6:33 *"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."*

"But seek first _____ and his _____, and _____ these things shall be yours as well."

Leader notes: God desires to provide for his children and encourages them to ask for what they need.

James 4:1-3 gives some further insight into asking:

"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions."



You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

From these passages one can see that asking God for something is not necessarily bad. But James warns to examine one's motives before asking.

Psalm 37:4-5 says:

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act."

Participants are instructed to find the page with Psalm 37 in their Workbook and write the answers to the questions below. Time should be allowed for participants to discuss their answers in small groups.

- What are some of the desires of your heart?
- Why is delighting in the Lord a prerequisite to receiving the desires of your heart?
- How does Psalm 37:4-5 relate to the Key Scripture for this lesson (Matthew 6:21)?

Confession

Leader will instruct participants to take a time of silent prayer and tell them it is an ideal opportunity to confess any sins related to jealousy, unhealthy competitiveness, and greed. (They should be given a few minutes to pray silently before moving on to the next section.)

Affirmation

The leader will affirm, "Romans 8:1 says, *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.* 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Again, the provision of Jesus is enough to cleanse you from any sins of jealousy, unhealthy competitiveness or greed. After all, Jesus Himself was tempted to be jealous, competitive for the wrong reasons, and greedy, but was without sin (Hebrews 4:15)! The provision of Jesus is also enough to empower you to live a life of contentment and delight in the Lord (2 Peter 1:3). It is Jesus who has saved you and is now living in you for His glory and your good (Galatians 2:20)!"

Faith in Action

The leader will tell participants that Christians aren't simply supposed to hear God's Word, but do what it says (James 1:22). They should identify one action point they can take as a result of the Bible Study and write it in their Workbook. It can be as simple as committing to congratulate one's opponent when they win in a ping-pong match or as intense as "fasting" from shopping malls for a month (if the participant feels it is a place they consistently struggle with greed). The leader states, "Remember, in Christ you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) and have power from God to live out His Word (Philippians 2:13)!"

Leader closes in prayer.

Scriptural References

***Matthew 6:21**

James 3:14-16 *But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.*

Galatians 5:19-21 *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.*

Philippians 2:3-4 *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look, not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Galatians 6:4 *But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.*

Colossians 3:23 *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.*

1 Timothy 6:9-10 *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

Matthew 6:19-24 *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*

Ecclesiastes 5:10 *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.*

Exodus 20:17

Matthew 7:7-11 *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

Hebrews 13:5-6 *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So, we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Luke 17:11-19 *On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed turned back, praising God with a loud voice; **and** he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."*

2 Timothy 3:1-4 *But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **heartless**, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, **treacherous**, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.*

Psalms 115:4-8 *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.*

1 Timothy 6:9-10

Luke 12:15

Philippians 4:19

James 1:17

Matthew 6:33

James 4:1-3

Psalms 37:4-5

Romans 8:1

1 John 1:9

Hebrews 4:15 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence.*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

James 1:22 *But show yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, anyone in Christ is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!*

Philippians 2:13 *For it is God who works in you both to will and to act for His good purpose.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Lesson 2

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:28

"Those who trust in their riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf."

Essential Question: When is the cost of success too high?

Key quote from story: *"Do you know how much your boxes and balls cost you?"*



MCG Objective:

The participant will examine the notion of success and the price he/she is willing to pay to feel important.

Materials:

- You Are Mine by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Bible Study Workbook
- ***YAM MCG**

Note to Leader: Each Bible Study lesson takes about 1.5 hours and includes some activities from the MCG as indicated by the asterisk*. If more activities are desired in order to extend learning, refer to the MCG and pick from activities that best suit your time frame and focus, but **please be sure to do the activities marked with an asterisk* as part of the Bible Study where indicated.**

Introduction (15 min.):

Participants will find the Lesson 2 page in their Workbook and write the definition of "Success" as leader dictates it:

"Success is defined as...

- 1) Achieving wealth, respect, or fame
- 2) The correct or desired result of an attempt"⁴

Leader instructs participants to discuss in small groups (or as a whole class):

What did it cost Punch in order to feel he had achieved success? (Participants fill in their answers in their Workbooks.)

Material costs? (his books and his bed, his money, eventually his home)

Health costs? (fatigue and physical pain)

Relational costs? (no time for his friends)

Spiritual costs? (trusting Eli)

Intrapersonal costs? (his sense of self-worth)

⁴ "Success", Merriam-Webster's Dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/success>

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader notes: Punchinello had a lot of boxes and balls and a temporary feeling of importance.

Discuss with participants what they think of this quote made by a woman competing for a date on a TV dating game?

"I would rather cry in a BMW than smile on a bicycle."⁵

***Guided Practice (15 min.):**

The Cost of Success (Note: If the group has done this exercise as part of the YAM MCG, leader should refer back to it and discuss again.)

Leader introduces the exercise about the cost of success. Participants are instructed to refer to the chart in their Workbook. Column 1 has "Items Acquired (Success)", Column 2 is labeled "Sacrifice Made (Cost)". Column 3 is to be labeled "Worth It? (Yes-No-Maybe)". Leader starts the exercise as a class filling in one example. After working the example together, the class comes up with 5 more, and participants copy the examples in their Workbook. Leader should follow with discussion before ending the exercise with the paragraph below.

Item Acquired (Success)	Sacrifice Made (Cost)	Worth It?		
		Yes	No	Maybe
Top scores on entrance exam	2 months of no social life			
A beautiful dress	Family vacation money			
University degree	A lot of time and money			
Luxury handbag	Shoplifting			
Sharing the gospel at school	Snubbed by friends			

Leader states, "I think we all agree that the material, health, relational, spiritual, and intrapersonal cost involved for Punchinello to have so many boxes and balls was not worth it. However, real life scenarios are usually not as black and white. There are some examples of success that are worth the cost, others that are not, and still others that may be worth it for only certain people, in certain situations, at certain times. Praise God that we have His Word, His Holy Spirit, and His Church to help us discern when the cost of success is worth it and when it is not."

⁵ I Would Rather Cry on a BMW than Smile on a Bicycle". Shiny Chinese. (1/17/2010). <http://www.shinychinese.com/i-would-rather-cry-in-a-bmw-than-smile-on-a-bicycle/>. Retrieved 11/1/16.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Bible Study (60 min.):

His Word - His Holy Spirit - His Church

Leader directs the participants to Workbook page for Lesson 2. The exercise should be gone through together and participants answer the questions in their Workbook.

His Word

Leader says, "King Solomon was known as the wisest and richest king in history. Certainly he experienced success on many levels. He owned expensive fleets of sailing ships that regularly brought back gold, silver, exotic animals, spices, and valuable trade items from the known world. By today's standard he would be a multi-billionaire, far exceeding any list of the richest people in the world."



Do the Math: Participants will calculate Solomon's riches based on 1 Kings 10:14: "Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold..."

The leader will give the facts needed:

A talent weighs roughly 34.3 kilograms (75 U.S. pounds), which is equal to 1,094 troy ounces ($1094 \times 666 =$ _____ *total # of troy oz.*).

The current value of a troy ounce of gold is 8545 RMB (\$1268 USD). [$8545 \text{ RMB} \times (1094 \times 666)$] = *value of 666 talents of gold today.*

Participants will answer what is today's RMB value of what Solomon took in each year? _____ Solomon ruled Israel for 40 years. Participants will calculate total amount above and multiply by 40. _____

Leader will refer to verse 15, "[this amount was] besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants, and from all the kings of the west, and from the governors of the land."

The leader continues, "Solomon was **very rich!** As such, I think we can look to his wisdom regarding success, especially acquiring wealth. It's one thing for a poor pastor to tell you that money doesn't bring happiness, but it's quite another for the wealthiest man who ever lived to say the same thing!"

Leader says, "Solomon's wisdom is found in the Book of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Here are select words of warning from Proverbs regarding wealth."

Participants will write out the Scriptures and circle the one most meaningful to them.

Proverbs 11:4

Proverbs 11:28

Proverbs 15:16

Proverbs 23:4-5

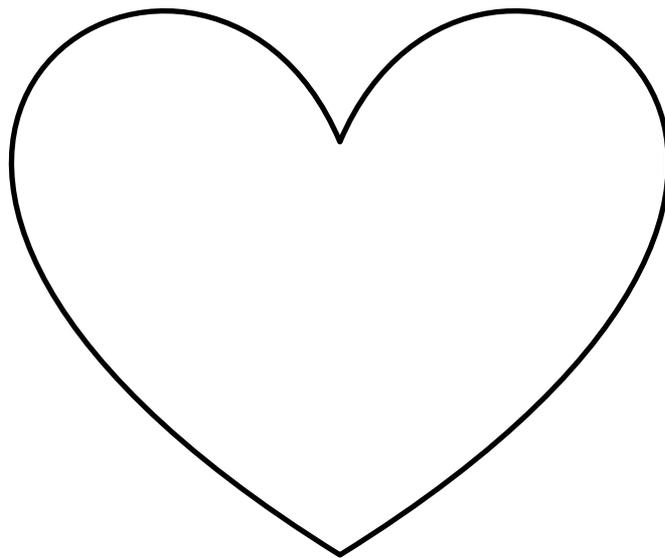
Proverbs 28:25

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader tells participants, "It is not bad to be wealthy, work diligently, or experience success. God wants to provide for all our needs. He commands us to work heartily and wants us to be wildly successful in the plans and purposes He has for us."

His Holy Spirit

Leader instructs participants to write down 5 areas where they would like to experience success, current or future. (Participants are given 2-5 minutes.) Participants should spend some time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to give them insight on these areas and if any need to be adjusted, eliminated, or expanded.



(Allow for 5-10 minutes.)

Leader directs participants to write their desires for success that were confirmed by the Holy Spirit within the heart in their Workbook.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

His Church

Now participants are to literally "share their heart" with their brothers and sisters in Christ!

They should break into groups no larger than 2-4 people and take turns sharing and praying together as the Holy Spirit leads.

Leader closes in Prayer.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Scriptural References

Proverbs 11:28

1 Kings 10:14-15

Proverbs 11:4 *Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.*

Proverbs 15:16 *In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.*

Proverbs 23:4-5 *Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist. When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven.*

Proverbs 28:25 *A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the Lord will be enriched.*

Lesson 3

Key Scripture: Hebrews 10:14 *"By one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."*

Essential Question: What defines you?

Key quote from story: *"Did I create them to act that way?"*



MCG Objective:

The participant will determine if their actions reflect their core values.

Materials:

- You Are Mine by Max Lucado (one per participant)
- Bible Study Workbook
- A piece of A4 paper for each participant
- * **YAM MCG**
-

Note to Leader: Each Bible Study lesson takes about 1.5 hours and includes some activities from the MCG as indicated by the asterisk*. If more activities are desired in order to extend learning, refer to the MCG and pick from activities that best suit your time frame and focus, but **please be sure to do the activities marked with an asterisk* as part of the Bible Study where indicated.**

Introduction (25 min.):

Leader opens the discussion with the questions: What defines you? What do you value? Do your actions reflect your values? Leader informs the class they will do a fun exercise that will help each participant to explore the answers to these questions.

***Teach/Explain: Value Squares Activity**

The leader will do the **Values Squares Exercise** from Lesson 3 of the MCG. If participants have done it, they should do it again. It can be done more than once. The objective of this exercise is for participants to identify people, possessions, activities, and future plans they value most.

1. Step 1-Participants identify people and things that are important to them. Each participant is given a sheet of paper. Leader will demonstrate how to fold, crease, and cut the paper to make 16 squares. (First, fold the paper in half from top to bottom, and crease it. Now fold and crease it from side to side. Then fold and crease it again from top to bottom, and finally again from side to side. Unfold the paper, and use a ruler or the side of a desk to tear along the crease lines). Using the 16 squares, participants should write a word or two to identify the following one example on each square:

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Three activities (favorite things to do)
Five important people in their lives
Three dreams they have for the future
Two things they would like to own someday (possessions)
Three favorite possessions

The leader tells participants to keep the squares in separate stacks on their desks but to combine the two things they want to own (D) with the possessions (E) into one stack. In other words, they should have four stacks: 3 activities, 5 people, 3 dreams, and 5 possessions.

2. Step 2-Participants listen to an imaginary story and identify who and what they value most. Leader explains to participants that they are going to read a story. After each part of the story, they will be asked to make a decision. They will have ten seconds to make the decision and discard a square, and all decisions are final. Discarded squares must be crumpled or torn up. The "Once Upon a Time" Activity Sheet is read aloud to participants. After each part, leader will pause for ten seconds before announcing that time is up. They will then continue to read on to the next step of the story.

3. Step 3- Time is taken for participants to reflect on their decisions and their results are discussed. Leader will explain that non-material items can often be a reflection of deeper core values. For example, if a participant ends up with his/her phone as one of the two things that they are left with at the end of this exercise, what core value is being represented? Maybe it is one of wealth (having a nice IT gadget) or entertainment (being able to play non-stop video games). However, the phone could also represent a value of communication (being able to speak with friends and family).

MINI CORE VALUES EXERCISE

Leader instructs the participants to refer to the **Core Values Chart** in their Workbook (See Appendix). Participants should pick their top 8 values. Leader will instruct them to write about how well their actions reflect their values in the space provided in the Workbook. (If participants have done the Core Values exercise already, leader should refer back to it or let them change their answers and/or do it again. If they have not done it, the exercise above is a shortened version.)

Bible Study (60 min.):

Do your actions reflect your values?

Leader will explain, "In the story of You Are Mine, the Wemmick society acted on a core value of acquisition. This core value resulted in a false assumption that "*Good Wemmicks have a lot. Not-so-good Wemmicks have a little.*" Find that line in the story and re-read the entire page for context. It seems funny to think that Wemmicks would consider others are good because they have a lot of balls or boxes, but do we not act in a similar way?"

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader continues, "We think well of people who have nice houses, are physically attractive, or hold degrees from prestigious universities. In the reverse, we can look down upon people who are uneducated, unattractive, or don't have a hukou from a certain city. The actions of the Wemmicks reflected their core values—no problem there. The problem was those values were not the values for which Eli intended them to live.

Are you living by God's values?

The leader tells participants, "God has a long list of values from the fruit of the Spirit, to servanthood, hard work and good character; the list could go on and on. However, His values can most simply be boiled down to four: belief, holiness, love of Him, and love of others."

Participants are directed to complete the Kingdom "Report Card" found in their Workbook and evaluate how well their actions reflect God's core values listed in the chart (1 is reflects very little; 10 is reflects perfectly. No one needs to see this. It's for you only.).

Kingdom Self Awareness		
Name:		
God's Core Values	Assessment (1-10)	
Belief <i>Write John 6:29:</i>		
Holiness <i>Write 1 Peter 1:15-16:</i>		
Love of God <i>Write Matthew 22:37:</i>		
Love of Others <i>Write Matthew 22:38:</i>		

Now, write **Hebrews 10:14** under the assessment.

"By one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."

(Participants come back together as a whole class.)

Leader notes, "This verse is a bit confusing. How can something that's already been made perfect be made more holy? Praise God for the riches of His wisdom and His ways! The two theological concepts put forth in this verse are so helpful to understand the Christian life. **Positional sanctification** is the reality that God sees believers in Christ with the righteousness and perfection of Christ Himself. Once someone accepts Jesus as his or her Savior, God sees that person as fully sanctified. However, have you ever known a Christian that didn't have at least some areas to grow in? **Progressive sanctification** is the reality that even though Christians have been declared righteous and infused with the very perfection of Christ, they are going to have a lifelong process of learning, growing, and refinement. Even though these truths don't seem like they can coexist, God says they can. In response, go back to your report card and in the second column write the grades Jesus would receive. Be encouraged and amazed that in Christ, God has already made you perfect!"

Leader continues, "What defines you? In Wemmicksville people were mainly defined by the **external**—what they possess and their outward achievements. This is the world's way of defining people." **Participants should take a few minutes to answer** these questions below in their Workbook where indicated:

- In what ways have you seen this in the world around you?
- In what ways have you had personal experience?
- Do you agree that defining people according to externals is overall a negative approach? *(Leader lets the participants answer honestly without correcting.)*

Leader states, "Even some people in the world have realized that this approach to defining themselves and others by outward appearances is negative. Their answer is to define people according to the **internal**—the character and core values of an individual. People that are kind, compassionate, or out to make the world a better place are subsequently defined as "good". Others not possessing such traits are consequently defined as "bad". That mindset may be fine for the world but not for the Christian."

Leader will explain to answer the question, "What defines you?" one actually has to reject the question altogether! For the believer, it's not what defines you, but **who defines you**. Leader will state, "The answer, of course, is none other than God Himself."

Participants should refer to the "**Who I Am In Christ**" page in their Workbook (See Appendix). Leader instructs participants to go around the class having each participant read aloud one truth at a time until the entire list has been read.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Confession

Leader instructs participants to take a time of silent prayer and states, "It's an ideal opportunity to confess any sins related to this lesson. Have you fallen short of living by God's values? Have you defined yourself or others by the world's standards and not by God's?" (*Leader should give them a few minutes to pray silently before moving on to the next section.*)

Affirmation

The leader will read Romans 8:1 which says, "*Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*" and 1 John 1:9 which says, "*If we confess, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness*". Leader will continue, "Again, the provision of Jesus is enough to cleanse you from all shortcomings and sins! Embrace your position as being made perfect in Christ, and trust in His provision to experience even greater sanctification."

Faith in Action

Leader will tell participants that Christians aren't simply supposed to hear God's Word, but do what it says (James 1:22). Participants should be told that one powerful way for their learning to have a deep and lasting impact is to share their learning with others. Leader will ask, "Is there a friend that was unable to participate in this program with which you could share this lesson? Would one of your family members enjoy doing the report card activity and having you explain the awesome theological concepts of positional and progressive sanctification? You may not have a seminary degree, but you've got the Word of God and His Holy Spirit to guide you!"

Leader closes in prayer.

Scriptural References

* **Hebrews 10:14**

John 6:29 *Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."*

1 Peter 1:15-16 *But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

Matthew 22:37-38 *And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment."*

Romans 8:1

Hebrews 10:14

1 John 1:9

James 1:22 *But show yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Once Upon a Time Story

(To be used with Valuable Squares Exercise)

1. While at the zoo, you were bitten by a rare species of monkey. You are starting to feel very sick, and your doctor diagnoses you with a very serious illness. Your doctor is unsure how to cure you and doesn't know whether the disease is fatal. He tells you that you have to give up one of the things you like to do (**discard 1 activity**).
2. Because of the disease, you are hospitalized for a short time. Your career suffers, and you lose two of the things you wanted from your future or career (**discard 1 dream and 1 future possession**).
3. Because of your time off from work, you are short of cash and have to sell one of your possessions (**discard 1 possession**).
4. You are hospitalized again. Your doctor requires you to give up another activity (**discard 1 activity**) and limit your visits with friends (**give up 1 relationship**).
5. You are exhausted from the illness and trying to work. You lose two more career items (**discard 2 dreams**) and must give up an activity (**discard 1 activity**). Also, another friend disappears from your life because you no longer seem able to maintain relationships (**discard 1 relationship**).
6. You are permanently hospitalized. You are only allowed one visitor and can take only one possession to the hospital with you. (**Discard 1 important person and 1 possession**).
7. Your doctor finds a hospital in Europe that specializes in rare monkey bites. Once there, you will have to live near the hospital for the rest of your life in case you ever suffer from symptoms again. Because you have to be at the hospital immediately, you can only take one person or possession. Which one will it be (**eliminate 1 possession and 1 relationship**)?
8. You are starting your life over again with only this person or possession.

Lesson 4

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:24

"One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want."

Essential Question: Am I a bucket or a pipe?⁶

Key quote from story: *"Perhaps you should give them to someone who needs them."*



MCG Objective:

The participant will explore generosity and its relationship to happiness.

Materials:

- You Are Mine by Max Lucado
- Bible Study Workbook
- ***YAM MCG**

Note to Leader: Each Bible Study lesson takes about 1.5 hours and includes some activities from the MCG as indicated by the asterisk*. If more activities are desired in order to extend learning, refer to the MCG and pick from activities that best suit your time frame and focus, but **please be sure to do the activities marked with an asterisk* as part of the Bible Study where indicated.**

Introduction (20 min.):

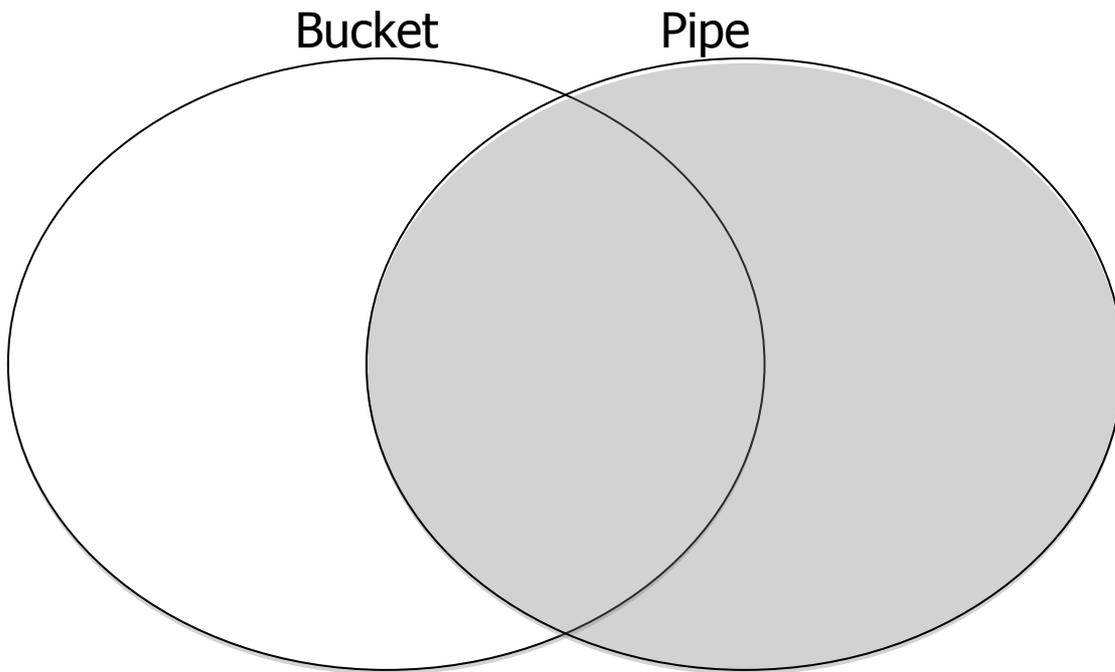
The leader directs participants to turn to the Lesson 4 page in their Workbook.

A Bucket or a Pipe? (If not done already, leader might want to do the fun Venn diagram exercise in the **Teach/Explain** part of Lesson 4 of the MCG.)

Leader begins with the questions: For what is a bucket used? How does a pipe work? Participants will answer the question in pairs using the Venn diagram. Participants will be instructed to draw a Venn diagram on their Workbook page labeled "Bucket/Pipe". In pairs, they are to discuss their thoughts about how a bucket and a pipe are different and alike (the center area is for shared traits) and fill in the Venn diagram.

⁶ Link, Jay E.K. "Are You Living Like A 'Bucket' or a 'Pipe'?" Stewardship Ministries". <https://vimeo.com/23162374>. Retrieved October 21, 2016.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.



After completion, instruct the class to come back as a group and share their findings. Leader continues, "What do these two items have to do with giving?"

Sea the Difference?

Leader says, "Let's look at the Dead Sea as a type of "bucket" and the Sea of Galilee as a type of "pipe." A bucket holds and a pipe channels water."

Leader continues, "The **Dead Sea** in Israel is also known as the "Killer Sea" because it has no marine life. Why is that? The answer: Measuring 67 km long, 18 km wide and 377 meters deep, it is one of the saltiest bodies of water on earth because it is almost 9 times saltier than normal ocean water. This level of salt content doesn't allow marine flora or fauna to survive. Why is this body of water so salty and uninhabitable? While it receives vital water from the Jordan River, the Dead Sea keeps all that water to itself and never flows out. Because it is below the mean sea level there are no outlets. Over the days and weeks water evaporates off the surface leaving the salts behind, and in the process, creates a very salty and uninhabitable environment, thus its deadly nickname."

The leader further explains, "On the other hand, we have the **Sea of Galilee** that also receives water from the same Jordan River. While small in comparison to the Dead Sea, it is rich in sea life having over 20 types of fish. For centuries, it has been a wealth of resources to fishermen and industries on and around the sea. Why is this sea so alive and vital? The answer is the water it receives flows out constantly, thus continually receiving a fresh supply."

Leader Asks: What is the message here?

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

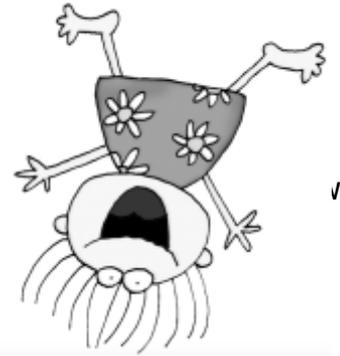
Bible Study (60 min.):

Leader instructs participants to write out **Proverbs 11:24** under the Venn diagram in their Workbook.

"One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want. Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered."

Leader asks, "What is this proverb saying?" Participants rephrase this in their own words in their Workbook.

The leader continues, "This proverb suggests God has it backward! How is it possible to give freely and grow richer? is it possible to keep your resources and have less? This seems to defy the laws of physics! Nonetheless, Proverbs is true. Biblical giving is not natural but *supernatural*."



In pairs, participants will look up each of these stories to serve as examples. Participants will read the verses and answer the questions in their Workbooks under the headings:

1.) The Widow of Zarephath

What did she give? 1 Kings 17:8-13

What did she receive? 1 Kings 17:14-16

2.) Mary

What did she give? Luke 1:30-38

What did she receive? Luke 1:46-55

3.) Jesus

What did he give? Philippians 2:5-8

What did he receive? Philippians 2:9-11

Leader takes the class through the answers for each scenario above, then the leader continues by saying the following:

Our Triune God is the ultimate example of generosity. God the Father started with giving His ONLY Son to us. Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice for us and sent the Holy Spirit as a gift from the Father. The Holy Spirit gives us the Father's Kingdom and sanctifies us daily. What an amazing cycle of generosity! As we bear out God's image, we too can reflect the same generous heart and nature.

Leader instructs participants to write the answers to these questions in their Workbook after reading the related verses:

What belongs to God? (**Psalm 24:1**)

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

What should we give back? (**Hebrews 12:28**)

What should be our attitude in giving? (**2 Corinthians 9:7**)

Leader tells participants that in the 1800's, Amy Carmichael gave her life to work with the poor and abandoned children in India. She said,

"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

A participant should read **1 Corinthians 13:3**:

"If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

Leader asks, "What does *love* have to do with giving?"

Leader continues by stating, "The only giving that matters in God's kingdom is giving done in love."

Leader asks, "Why do we love (not how, but why)?" Participants read **1 John 4:19** which says:

"We love because he first loved us."

Leader states, "Yes, God loves us! What's more, His love to and through us has a transformative nature and is linked with all sorts of benefits. As Christians, we know we were made to be a pipe and not a bucket; we know it is more blessed to flow with giving rather than hoard what we receive (**Acts 20:35b**). We have experienced the joy of giving and want to do it more and more! But, did you know that even science tells us there are positive benefits to giving? We'll play a game to discover just what science says are the benefits God has embedded in the act of generosity."

Game: Treasure Hunt

Before class, leader writes out the 7 science-based benefits on slips of paper (See Appendix) and hides them around the room. For fun they could be hidden in plastic eggs. Participants are told that hidden around the room are 7 pieces of paper with these health benefits. They are to hunt for all 7 hidden papers. Participants are released to find the "hidden treasures". Once all are found, they come back to the whole class and read them out loud. Participants copy the list in their Workbook next to the Treasure Basket.

Upon completion of the game leader notes, "We can see from this list that generosity has natural and supernatural returns!"

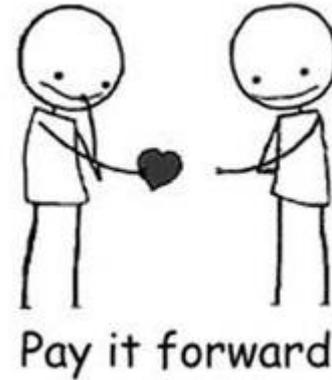
Note to Leader: Next is the **Time, Talent and Material Resources Inventory** from the MCG for Lesson 4. If the class has done it already, take time now to review.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Time, Talent, Material Resources Inventory

Leader instructs participants to refer to the chart in the Workbook under Lesson 4, "My Time, Talent, or Material Resources".

Leader continues, "As for generosity, it's easy to think of material things you might have to give away, but what if you don't have any material things or money? What are some examples of things that don't cost anything to give?"



Possible answers:

1. babysitting
2. a listening ear
3. friendship
4. a helping hand
5. a hug

Instruct participants to work on their own and fill in the chart in their Workbook with 4 more examples.

My Time, Talent, or Material Resources	Acts of Generosity
Ex. I have Saturdays free.	I can help with household chores.
Ex. I sing or play an instrument.	I can offer to entertain at seniors' homes. I can help someone who is learning to play my instrument

After participants complete their inventory, leader brings the class back to share answers if there is time.

Leader states, "Remember, as God's image bearers, we can give back and be generous by giving of ourselves, our time, our listening ear, our forgiveness, our love."

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Confession

Instruct the participants to take a time of silent prayer. Leader suggests, "It's an ideal opportunity to confess if you've been acting more like a bucket than a pipe or if you have missed the importance of loving while giving." (*Leader should give them a few minutes to pray silently before moving on to the next section.*)

Affirmation

Leader states, "2 Corinthians 5:14 says that those of you in Christ are compelled by His love. He died so that you could live for Him. If you haven't been living for Him, let me remind you of His great love once again. Let me bless you to receive that love, repent of your sins, and start afresh in His power today. You love because He first loved you. You are generous because He was first generous with you. In Christ, you are a pipe flowing with your time, many talents, and material resources moving through you to bless your friends and family, your church and community, your country, and this world. Amen and amen."

Faith in Action

The leader explains, "Christians aren't simply supposed to hear God's Word but do what it says (James 1:22). Identify one action point you can take as a result of the Bible Study and write it in your Workbook. It can be as simple as arranging to babysit for your younger siblings so your parents can have a date or as serious as committing a portion of your allowance or earnings to a church or community project. Remember, you don't obey God to be loved...you obey God because you're already loved! And, you obey with the power He supplies (Philippians 2:13)!"

Participants can write out 1 action point they will take in their Workbook.

Leader closes in prayer.

Scriptural References

*** Proverbs 11:24**

1 Kings 17:8-16 *Then the word of the LORD came to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Luke 1:30-38 *And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

Luke 1:46-55 *And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."*

Philippians 2:5-13 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

Psalms 24:1 *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.*

Hebrews 12:28 *Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.*

2 Corinthians 9:7 *Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

1 Corinthians 13:3 *If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

1 John 4:19

Acts 20:35b *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

2 Corinthians 5:14 *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died.*

James 1:22 *But show yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

Lesson 5

Key Scripture: Psalm 24:1

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,^[a] the world and those who dwell therein."

Essential Question: What is proper stewardship?



Key quote from the story:

"You're important not for what you have but for who you are. You are mine."

MCG Objective:

The participant will define "stewardship" and examine what it means to properly steward his/her time, talent, and material resources.

Materials:

- You Are Mine by Max Lucado
- Bible Study Workbook
- ***YAM MCG**

Note to Leader: Each Bible Study lesson takes about 1.5 hours and includes some activities from the MCG as indicated by the asterisk*. If more activities are desired in order to extend learning, refer to the MCG and pick from activities that best suit your time frame and focus, but **please be sure to do the activities marked with an asterisk* as part of the Bible Study where indicated.**

Introduction (25 min.):

Leader instructs participants to listen as he/she reads **the** "Story of the Good Steward" from **Luke 12:42-48** (Found in Lesson 5 in MCG).

"And the Master replied, 'I'm talking to any faithful, sensible man whose master gives him the responsibility of feeding the other servants. If his master returns and finds that he has done a good job, there will be a reward—his master will put him in charge of all he owns. But if the man begins to think, 'My Lord won't be back for a long time,' and begins to whip the men and women he is supposed to protect, and to spend his time at drinking parties and in drunkenness—well, his master will return without notice and remove him from his position of trust and assign him to the place of the unfaithful. He will be severely punished, for though he knew his duty he refused to do it. But anyone who is not aware that he is doing wrong will be punished only lightly. Much is required from those to whom much is given, for their responsibility is greater.'"

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader instructs participants to write the following definition of "Stewardship" in their Workbook on the Lesson 5 page after the story:

Stewardship is "*the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care; for example: stewardship of natural resources.*"⁷

Leader states, "At the onset of the creation of humanity, God asked Adam and Eve to steward the earth. Many people approach stewardship of the earth from a place of domination. Since humans are the most intelligent life form on earth, they feel it's their right to treat the earth however they wish. Not only is the perspective short-sided for everyone, but also for the Christian it is unbiblical." A participant should read **Genesis 1:26** aloud:

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"

Leader asks, "Did any of you hear an alternative to "domination" in this verse?" (Participants guess. The verse can be reread if needed. The leader confirms the answer as "*dominion*".)

Participants are instructed to refer to the portion of their Workbook where the following is written: **Domination vs. Dominion**

Leader will dictate the following definitions as participants write them next to the words in their Workbook:

Domination is "*to have control or power over someone or something*"⁸.

Dominion is "*the power to rule: control of country or region*"⁹.

Leader continues, "While the two seem similar because both involve a type of control, they are vastly different. One takes power over others or over creation from a place of self-interest alone. The other involves a nurturing power over others or over creation with the end purpose of benefitting all involved. Why do you think God commanded *dominion* rather than *domination*? How does dominion reflect God's character?"

Leader reads:

Domination says:

I deserve this.

I am in charge.

I believe it should be my way.

I will make it happen.

⁷ Stewardship", Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stewardship>.

⁸ "Domination", Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <http://www.Studentsdictionary.com/definition/domination>.

⁹ Dominion", Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <http://www.Studentsdictionary.com/definition/dominion>.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader says, "History shows that domination can lead to cruelty and destruction."

Leader reads:

Dominion says:

I do not deserve this.

What a privilege I have!

I believe in something bigger than me.

I will help this to develop carefully.

Leader says, "History shows that dominion can lead to generosity and growth." Again, dominion is a proper stewardship perspective. Proper stewardship, at its root, is a matter of respect for God, self, and others. It means that we are to carefully and responsibly manage what is entrusted to us for the greater good."

Leader tells participants that **stewardship at its core is actually about relationship** more than material things. Someone (i.e. the Master from the story) entrusts something (i.e. material goods or activity) to another (i.e. servant/steward) who acts as his/her agent.

Leader states, "By now it should be apparent that we are managers, not owners, of this world and its resources. But even more profound is the knowledge that we belong to God."

Bible Study (60 min.):

Leader tells participants that, in You Are Mine, Eli says to Punchinello, "You are special -important- because you are *mine*."

Leader will ask, "What does it mean to belong to God?" and explain that **there** are many facets of belonging to God. Participants will focus on 3 primary aspects. In the following exercise, they will have the opportunity to discover what Scriptures say about:

- 1.) God's ownership of us
- 2.) Our relationship with him
- 3.) The resulting benefits

Leader will post 3 large pieces of paper with the three station titles - OWNERSHIP, RELATIONSHIP, BENEFIT - in three areas around the room. These verses from the chart below should be written on strips of paper and put in a bowl. Working in pairs, participants draw a verse from the bowl, look up the passage and determine where that verse belongs among the three stations, and go there. (The leader can make it a speed race giving them 1 minute.) After all the participants are at a station, they read their verses and discuss as a class if that's the proper positioning. Participants should change placement if the class determines they were "wrong". The references should be taped to the correct stations.

**CLICK HERE
TO BELONG**

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Ownership

Psalm 24:1
Psalm 100:3
Romans 14:8
1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Relationship

Psalm 139:1-6
John 15:15
Romans 8:15
Hebrews 4:14-15

Benefit

1 Corinthians 2:9
2 Corinthians 1:20
Ephesians 1:3
1 Peter 1:3-4

After the game, leader instructs participants to write the verses under the appropriate column in their Workbook. (Leader can write them on the board, but they are already written in the Workbook.)

Leader continues, "Now, from a place of understanding more of what it means to belong to God, let's consider stewardship further."

Leader instructs participants to write out the Key Scripture, **Psalm 24:1**, in their Workbook:

"The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein."

Participants should refer to the "Stewardship Top Ten" list in their Workbook. They should think of all the things they have to steward for God. This can be time, talents, material resources, relationships, their hopes for the future, and more. Then, they select what they feel are the ten most important items for them to steward for God and write them out. If others are still working, they can make doodles and drawings to go with their list. (They should be given no more than 10 minutes total.)

Leader tells participants the things they listed may be very important to steward well, but for the Christian, one of the most important things to steward well is the gospel message.

Leader states, "Wow, that's an eye-opening thought! Have you ever thought about your responsibility to **steward the gospel**? Let's consider the following five questions as we look at stewarding the gospel well. Feel free to take notes in your Workbook under each question as we talk."

- 1) What does it mean to steward the gospel?
- 2) Why do Christians need to steward the gospel?
- 3) Is there additional motivation for stewarding the gospel?
- 4) What are the benefits of the gospel to those that receive it?
- 5) How do I share the gospel?

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Leader instructs the participants to read the questions and the references out loud. As the class discusses the answers, participants should take notes in their Workbook under the appropriate question. As leader reviews the possible answers, they should be sure those in parentheses are included.

What does it mean to steward the gospel? (Leader solicits answers.)

Leader states, "Going back to the last lesson, it basically means that we act as a pipe with the gospel, not a bucket. We don't keep it for ourselves. We happily and eagerly share it with others. In short, stewarding the gospel well is about sharing the gospel."

Why do Christians need to steward the gospel?

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 (God entrusted Christians with this job.)

Mark 16:15 (God commands it.)

Is there additional motivation for stewarding the gospel?

Romans 1:16 (It is the power of God.)

Acts 4:12 (It is the only hope for salvation.)

What are the benefits of the gospel to those that receive it?

Leader will tell participants to think about what they learned from the last exercise and to think back even further to the "Who I Am in Christ" handout.

How do Christians share the gospel?

Leader asks, "Have any of you bought a product recently that you were so excited about? Did you tell/text/message/WeChat or show anyone what you bought? When we are truly excited about something, we can't help but share it. It comes quite naturally. However, there are many obstacles working against you sharing the gospel. So, don't feel discouraged if you have a bit of fear or intimidation.

Remember, God has called you to do this, and whenever He calls, He empowers!"

The leader instructs, "There are many approaches to sharing the gospel: church-wide outreaches, cold-call evangelism, street preaching, etc. Most approaches can be fruitful when done with **love** and under the **guidance of the Holy Spirit**. Jesus, His Disciples, and the early church demonstrated many approaches. However, Jesus did seem to have a preference for "relational evangelism." **Let's break into groups to discuss** the aspects of relational evangelism listed below and your thoughts about sharing the gospel."

Leader instructs participants to take notes in their Workbook on the 3 steps listed below as they are read. (Time should be allowed to answer any remaining questions.) Leader tells participants that these are three easy steps¹⁰ one can always use that don't require major seminary study:

¹⁰ Reed, B. Excerpted from "How to Share the Gospel", Lifeway Young Adults. October 29, 2014. <http://youngadults.lifeway.com/2014/10/3-easy-ways-to-share-the-gospel/>. Retrieved September 14, 2015

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Follow Christ. Let your life and actions be a witness of Christ to others. Can you give an example of someone whose life is a witness?

Share your story. What has Christ done for you? Be real not phony! As an exercise, take time to write out your testimony. *(If participants are interested in writing out their testimony, leader can refer them to "A Guide from Acts 22:3-21 on Sharing Testimony" in their Workbook. See Appendix.)*

Invite other people into your story. Jesus won over people one-by-one, genuinely loving and caring about people. This takes time and commitment. Start by praying for those you know!

Leader states, "Stewarding the gospel well is as much about sharing it as it is about sharing it **accurately**. Many people are confused about what it really means to be a Christian, how one can be saved, and whether or not that salvation can be lost. Think back to Lesson 0 and the importance of communicating the truth that salvation is by grace through faith. Think about how it was only the sacrifice of Christ that allowed you to be close to God, not your own efforts. Think about the awesome reality that you were once dead in your sins and through the gospel have been made alive in Christ!"

Leader concludes, "In conclusion, while many in the world are rightfully concerned about environmental issues, as Christians we also have an eternal perspective. We can commit to being good stewards of the earth, but in light of the power and eternal significance of the gospel, it is clearly one of the most important areas of stewardship."

Confession

The leader will direct participants to take a time of silent prayer and tells them it is an ideal opportunity to confess any sins related to poor stewardship of the gospel or any other area where the Holy Spirit brought conviction. *(They should be given a few minutes to pray silently before moving on to the next section.)*

Affirmation

Leader says, "We looked at Hebrews 4:14-15 earlier, but I want to go a bit further and encourage you with verse 16 as well: *"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* God's mercy, grace, and help are available to us at this very moment. You are His gospel ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:18-20). This is a job you were made for and empowered to do! (Acts 1:8)."

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Faith in Action

Leader tells participants that Christians aren't simply supposed to hear God's Word, but they are to do what it says (James 1:22). They should identify one action point they can take as a result of the Bible Study, and write it in their Workbook. It can be as simple as writing out their testimony, or as intense as committing to share the gospel with at least one friend or family member by the end of the week.

Leader closes in prayer.

Scriptural References

*** Psalm 24:1**

Luke 12:42-48

Genesis 1:26

Psalm 100:3 *Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.*

Romans 14:8 *For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *Or 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, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

Psalm 139:1-6 *O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.*

John 15:15 *No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

Romans 8:15 *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"*

Hebrews 4:14-16

1 Corinthians 2:9 *What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.*

2 Corinthians 1:20 *For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory.*

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.*

1 Peter 1:3-4 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

Mark 16:15 *And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation..."*

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Acts 4:12 *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

James 1:22 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

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Lesson 6 EXTENDED LEARNING

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:10

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Essential Question: How can I make a difference?

Key quote from story: *"I'll be the highest with the most."*

Objective of MCG:

The participant will consider the impact of consumerism.

Materials:

- You Are Mine by Max Lucado
- Bible Study Workbook
- *YAM MCG



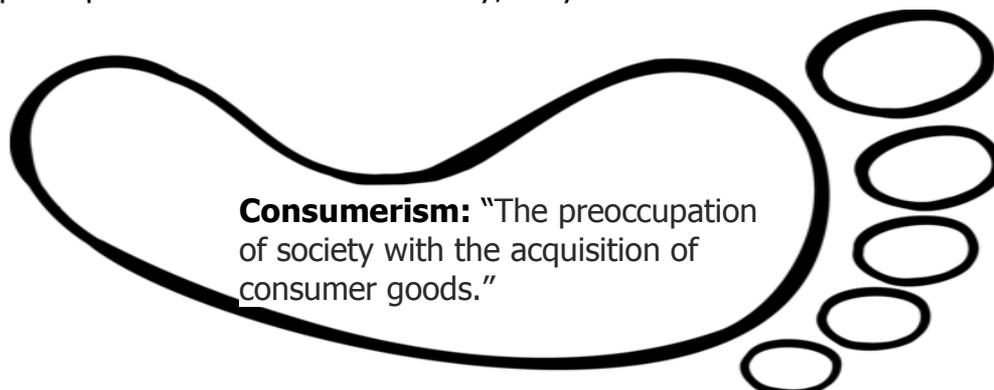
Note to Leader: Each Bible Study lesson takes about 1.5 hours and includes some activities from the MCG as indicated by the asterisk*. If more activities are desired in order to extend learning, refer to the MCG and pick from activities that best suit your time frame and focus, but **please be sure to do the activities marked with an asterisk* as part of the Bible Study where indicated.**

Introduction (15-25 min.):

Trashy Subject

(Leader refers to Teach/Explain from Lesson 6 MCG. If participants haven't done the exercise, they should do it now and allow more time. If they have done it, the leader should bring in a 7kg bag of waste and reiterate the basic message of the exercise in the MCG.)

Leader instructs participants to refer to Lesson 6 in their Workbooks. Inside the footprint they are to write the definition of **Consumerism**¹¹ as leader dictates. (If the participants have done this already, they should take a minute to review.)



¹¹ "Consumerism", Oxford Dictionaries. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/consumerism>. Retrieved 10/18/16

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Bible Study (60 min.): Consuming vs. Creating

Leader reads this portion from Independent Practice Lesson 6 of MCG:

*"Let's Get Creative! Many global activists see a future of doom and gloom for our planet, but they don't take into account mankind's creativity and ingenuity. Without a doubt, we **MUST** be responsible consumers. However, we also need to cultivate creativity and ingenuity with the hope that we will develop inspiring solutions to today's global issues. Imagine, you could be the one to discover the next reusable fuel source, or you could invent a device that changes the way wireless signals are transmitted!"*

Leader continues, "Aspiration like that may seem overwhelming or out of your reach, but as Christians we are encouraged knowing that God is good and gives us good gifts of which creativity is one. Below is a sermon by Ray Fowler entitled, "God's Good Gift of Creativity." It can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/gods-good-creation-series/gods-good-gift-of-creativity/>

Leader will instruct participants to read the sermon found in their Workbook. After about 15-20 minutes, they should break into small groups to discuss the questions at the end of the sermon.

Sermon "God's Good Gift of Creativity" by Ray Fowler

INTRODUCTION

Our text in Exodus takes place immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments. Moses has ascended to the top of Mount Sinai where God has just given him detailed instructions concerning the tabernacle. And now in chapter 31 God tells Moses how the building of the tabernacle is to be accomplished.

Exodus 31:1-6 *Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts — to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship. Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you."*

So what is creativity, and where does it come from? When God created the world, he created man and woman in his own image. He told them to be fruitful and multiply and to rule over all that he had created. As part of that rule God had Adam name the animals. This was one of the first recorded creative acts of man. He also placed Adam and Eve in the garden and gave them work to do. That work involved thinking, planning, and decision making, all of which are aspects of the creative process.

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After the fall, we find that mankind's creativity continued, although it was now stained by sin. In the early chapters of Genesis we see the rise of agriculture, the building of cities, the forging of tools, and even the beginning of music. We read in **Genesis 4:21** that "Jubal ... was the father of all who play the harp and flute." In short, we find the beginnings of human culture as man began to put into practice the creative gifts that God had given him to fulfill his task of ruling over creation.

So God, the creator, is the source of all creativity. And in creating man in his own image, he gave man gifts of creativity also.

Our text has to do with a very practical matter. God is telling Moses who will be in charge of building the tabernacle. But the text also contains four very important principles for us as we consider God's good gift of creativity.

I. God chooses to whom he gives gifts. (1-2)

The first thing we learn from our text this morning is that God chooses to whom he gives gifts. Look at verses 1-2: "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.'" The word translated "chosen" in this verse is a word that means, "called or commissioned." You have heard of people commissioning artwork to be done. Here God commissions Bezalel, son of Uri, for the work of overseeing the building of the tabernacle. God had gifted Bezalel for this task. God chooses to whom he gives gifts.

We find this principle throughout Scripture. It is true of spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12,

Paul lists a number of the gifts, and then he says, "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines." (**1 Corinthians 12:11**) **Hebrews 2:4** also speaks of "gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will."

But spiritual gifts are only one example of this. God is the giver of all gifts, and he chooses which gifts to give to whom. God did not create everyone the same. To some he gives artistic ability, to others musical ability, to others the ability to make things with their hands. God in his wisdom gave you exactly the creative gifts that he wanted you to have. Your gifts are part of who you are. They are part of the person that God created you to be. And so we should receive those gifts with thanksgiving and use them to the best of our ability.

Some people don't like the gifts that they have. They would rather trade them in for someone else's gifts. But that displays a lack of faith in God. We read in Isaiah 45: "Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?'" (**Isaiah 45:9**) But isn't that exactly what we are doing when we question the gifts that God has given us? Are we not saying, "God, why did you make me this way? God, why did you give me this set of gifts? Why didn't you give me those gifts instead?" God chooses to whom he gives gifts, and so we should not disparage our own gifts from God, nor should we envy the gifts of others.

II. God gives knowledge, skill, ability, and craftsmanship. (3)

The second thing we learn from our text this morning is that God gives knowledge, skill, ability, and craftsmanship. Look at Exodus 31 again: "See, I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts." (**Exodus 31:2-3**)

I find it interesting that God says, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God to do all these things." Throughout Scripture we continually find God's Spirit involved in creative acts. When God first created the world, we read in **Genesis 1:2** that "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." When God created man, we read in **Genesis 2:7**: "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." That word "breathed" calls to mind God's spirit. What is the breath of God if not the Spirit of God? When you become a Christian, you become a new creation in Christ. How? Jesus said you are born again, which he also called being "born of the Spirit." (**John 3:8**) He was referring back to Ezekiel 36 where God said, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (**Ezekiel 36:26-27**) The Holy Spirit is part of all of God's creative acts, and so it should not surprise us that God also gives us our creative gifts through the Holy Spirit.

Apparently this man, Bezalel, was a master craftsman. He was filled with the Spirit of God in knowledge, skill, and ability to do the work of building the tabernacle. God had clearly chosen Bezalel for this task long before he revealed it to Moses. Moses didn't just walk down the mountain and find that Bezalel could suddenly do all these things. God doesn't work that way. God had been preparing Bezalel all along. And Bezalel would have had to work hard to develop those gifts as well. Still, God had chosen him for this task, and with that in mind, he had "filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts."

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Now we are not all going to be like a Bezalel. It seems that Bezalel was an extraordinarily gifted man. You and I will probably not attain the same level of skill and mastery that Bezalel obviously had. And that's okay. God not only chooses to whom he gives gifts; he also chooses how much of any gift he gives to each person. But the point is this. Whatever knowledge, skill, and ability you have comes from God. **James 1:17** says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father." Paul asked the Corinthians, "What do you have that you did not receive?" (**1 Corinthians 4:7**) God is the giver of all good gifts, and so we should never take a wrongful pride in the talents and gifts that he has given us.

I taught guitar and piano for many years, and one thing I learned quickly was that there were some people who had a special aptitude for music that others just did not. For some people rhythm and timing came naturally, whereas for others they just never seemed to get it. Some people take to an instrument or an activity in a special way. They have a certain facility for writing or drawing or electronics or computers where it just comes easy for them. We often call them "naturals", but there is nothing natural about it. God gives us those abilities. They are a gift from God.

Do you have knowledge in a certain area? Do you have special abilities? Do you have skills that you have been able to develop beyond what the average person can do in that area? God gave that to you. It comes from him. God gave you your creative abilities, and you need to honor him with the gifts he has given you. God gives knowledge, skill, ability, and craftsmanship.

III. God gives a wide variety of creative gifts. (4-5)

The third thing we learn from our text this morning is that God gives a wide variety of creative gifts. Going back to Exodus 31, look at verses 4-5. When God gifted Bezalel, he gave him knowledge, skill, and ability "to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship." (**Exodus 31:4-5**)

Bezalel wasn't just given one gift like the ability to work with gold. Bezalel was skilled in many mediums – gold, silver, and bronze. He knew how to cut stones and place them in beautiful settings. He understood carpentry and how to work with wood. Apparently, he knew much more because verse five finally stops listing all his different skills and just says he was able to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.

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God gave Bezalel a wide variety of gifts. And that was all just one person! **Romans 12:6** says, "We [all] have different gifts, according to the grace given us." God in his grace gives a wide variety of gifts to all people everywhere.

So when we think of creative gifts, we should not limit ourselves to just thinking about the creative arts – painting, sculpture, writing, music, dance, design, photography, and so on. All of human endeavor involves creative gifts and abilities, from a simple setting of the table for dinner to the building of a vast cathedral.

Every person here today is a creative person. It's true. Anytime you put part of yourself into a task or project you are being creative. Anytime you organize or decorate something you are being creative. Anytime you solve a problem you are being creative. Anytime you inject humor into a situation you are being creative. Anytime you apply the knowledge, ability, and skill that God has given you to the task at hand, you are being creative.

So when you think about creativity, don't just think about the arts! God gives a wide variety of creative gifts, and he has given creative gifts to you, too. There is a reason God gave you the specific gifts that make you who you are.

IV. God's gifts have a purpose. (6)

That leads us to our fourth and final point this morning. God's gifts have a purpose. Look at verse 6 where God expands the creative task for building the tabernacle beyond just Bezalel: "Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you." (**Exodus 31:6**)

Why did God give Bezalel and Oholiab and all the other craftsmen their specific skills? I am sure they used those skills for many other things as well, but God also had a specific purpose in mind for them. God had given them all the particular skills they needed in order to build the tabernacle, and not just to build it, but to build it according to God's exact specifications, as God told Moses, "to make everything I have commanded you."

God gives creative gifts for a purpose. Part of that purpose is simply for us to fulfill our role as human beings made in the image of God. Listen to what theologian Abraham Kuyper says about this:

"As image-bearer of God, man possesses the possibility both to create something beautiful and to delight in it. ... The world of sounds, the world of forms, the world of tints, and the world of poetic ideas can have no other source than God; and it is our privilege as bearers of his image, to have a perception of this beautiful world, artistically to reproduce, and humanly to enjoy it." (Abraham Kuyper; Calvinism, pp. 142,156-157)

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A strong, biblically based creational theology encourages us as Christians to get involved in all areas of life. Too often we think of Christianity only in terms of the Bible, prayer, and church on Sunday mornings. But as important as all those things are, the Christian life is so much bigger than that. Christianity is all about being human to the glory of God. That means taking all that God has created in this world and all of human culture and creativity and then returning it to God in praise. As Paul says in 1 Timothy 4, "Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." (**1 Timothy 4:4**) Otherwise, Christian faith becomes divorced from real life, and we lose our real influence as Christians in the world.

The best book I have ever read on this whole theme of Christian interaction with culture and creativity and the arts was written by the Dutch art history professor, H. R. Rookmaaker. The book is called Art Needs No Justification. It is a thin little paperback, only 60 pages long, and for me it was life changing. It opened my eyes to the incredible importance of the doctrine of creation for the church as a whole. Listen to some of his analysis of how Christianity began to lose its influence in society in the eighteenth century.

Rookmaaker writes:

"The mainstream of Christianity turned to a kind of pietism in which the idea of the covenant, as preached in the books of Moses and throughout the whole of Scripture, was bypassed. The Old Testament was often neglected, and the meaning of the Christian life was narrowed to that of the devotional life alone. Too easily, large areas of human reality, such as philosophy, science, the arts, economics and politics were handed over to the world, as Christians concentrated mainly on pious activities."

"If the world's system was a secularized one, missing true spirituality, the Christian's attitude also became a reduced one, missing its foundation in reality, being uninterested in the created world. It sometimes became a ghostlike spirituality without a body. Christians have indeed been active. But they have often optimistically believed that it was enough to preach the gospel and to help in a charitable way. In concentrating on saving souls they have forgotten that God is the God of life and that the Bible teaches people how to live, how to deal with our world, God's creation. The result is that even though many people became Christians, nevertheless our world became totally secularized with almost no Christian influence." (Rookmaaker; Art Needs No Justification, pp. 17-18)

The church lost its *influence* in the world because it lost *interest* in the world that God created. How sad! As Christians, we should not only be interested in Christianity, but we should be interested in everything! C.S. Lewis once wrote:

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"I believe that any Christian who is qualified to write a good popular book on any science may do much more good by that than by any directly apologetic work. ... What we want is not more little books about Christianity, but more little books by Christians on other subjects." (Lewis; God in the Dock, 'Christian Apologetics')

I thought about that when I started up my blog. The tagline for my blog reads: "Thoughts on God and life from a Christian perspective." That was very intentional. I could have limited my blog specifically to Christian topics and themes only, but I knew that would also have limited my audience. So I chose to write about anything that interested me – books, music, movies, science, technology, politics, parenting, family life, and so on. Do you know what has happened? All sorts of people visit the blog. Somebody searching for information on a recent movie like "3:10 to Yuma" arrives at the blog, reads the post, then looks around and discovers other articles of interest. I don't specifically mention God or Christ in every post because I don't have to. All of life belongs to God. Anyone who reads the blog will soon discover that I am a Christian because that is just part of who I am, and it comes out naturally in the blog as a whole. Isn't that the way it should work in all areas of our lives?

Listen to H. R. Rookmaaker once again:

"Very often we have created barriers against hearing the gospel because we preached that we care for people and that this world is God's but we did not act on those principles. Our lack of care showed that we were not really interested in people or in God's creation. ...

We should remind ourselves that Christ did not come to make us Christians or to save our souls only but that he came to redeem us that we might be human in the full sense of that word. To be new people means that we can begin to act in our full, free, human capacity in all facets of our lives. Therefore, to be a Christian means that one has humanity, the freedom to work in God's creation and to use the talents God has given to each of us, to his glory and to the benefit of our neighbors. Therefore, if we have artistic talents, they should be used." (Rookmaaker; Art Needs No Justification, pp. 19-20)

Beyond the general overall purpose of reflecting the image of God in society by exercising your creative gifts, God also has some specific purposes for the gifts he has given you. Going back to the tabernacle in Exodus 31, God had a very specific purpose for the creative gifts he gave to Bezalel and Oholiab. How about for New Testament believers today?

Ephesians 2:10 says that "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." Isn't that awesome? Just as Bezalel and Oholiab produced quality workmanship

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for the tabernacle, you are the workmanship of Almighty God. God has not only prepared specific works for you to do, but he also created you with the specific gifts necessary to do those good works. Make no mistake about it. God's gifts have a purpose, and God has a purpose for the creative gifts he has given you.

CONCLUSION: In summary: 1) God chooses to whom he gives gifts; 2) God gives knowledge, skill, ability, and craftsmanship; 3) God gives a wide variety of creative gifts; and 4) God's gifts have a purpose.

What should our response be to all this?

1) Thank God for the creative gifts he has given you. Do not put down your gifts. Do not envy the gifts of others. Do not boast in your gifts. Rather, thank God for the specific gifts he has given you, and do so with a spirit of humility and wonder.

2) Use and develop your creative gifts. Remember the parable of the talents? God does not want you to bury your gifts in the ground. If you have a sharp mind, develop it! If you have the ability to produce beautiful things with your hands, produce them! Work hard, and develop the gifts God has given you. The Bible says, "To whom much is given, much will be required." Take the gifts that God has given you, develop them to the best of your ability, and then use them in loving service to God and others.

3) Engage all of life for God's glory. Remember, "Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." (**1 Timothy 4:4**) So if you are an artist, then yes, go ahead and paint scenes from the Bible, but also paint portraits and landscapes and snippets of life. If you are a musician, then yes, write praise songs to God, but also write love songs and fun songs and songs about all aspects of life. No matter where your gifts or interests lie, God can use you to bring him glory in this world.

By Ray Fowler. © Ray Fowler. Website: <http://www.rayfowler.org>

Leader Instructs participants to work in small groups to discuss the following 5 questions (25 min.):

What are the creative gifts God has given you?

How have you developed your creative gifts?

How can you develop your creative gifts?

How have you used your creative gifts for God's glory?

How can you use your creative gifts for God's glory?

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Creativity in Action: Stones of Remembrance (25 min.):

As a final exercise, participants will create Stones of Remembrance.

Leader states, "It is our hope and prayer that you encountered God during this program; whether through his Word, His Holy Spirit, or through one another. As a final exercise, we want to give you an opportunity to use your creative gifts. The Book of Joshua 4:8-9 speaks of "stones of remembrance," which were physical reminders of an encounter with God."

Leader continues, "At this time you will use one of your creative gifts to make a "stone of remembrance", a physical reminder pertaining to this program. Write a poem, make a collage, compose a song, etc.

Finally, at the end of the exercise, leader will have the participants share their creations and comments about what was the most meaningful for them in the program.

Close in a prayer.

Scriptural References

*** Ephesians 2:10**

Exodus 31:1-8

Genesis 4:21 *His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.*

1 Corinthians 12:11 *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

Hebrews 2:4 *While God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

Isaiah 45:9 *Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'?*

Exodus 31:2-3 *See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship.*

Genesis 1:2 *The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

Genesis 2:7 *Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

John 3:8 *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*

Ezekiel 36:26-27 *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

1 Corinthians 4:7 *For who sees anything different in you? 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?*

Romans 12:6 *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith.*

1 Timothy 4:4 *For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.*

Joshua 4:8-9 *And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the LORD told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.



You Are Mine (YAM) Bible Study Workbook

"You are important not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are."

Name: _____

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Lesson 0

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-13

"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked ... But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ..." (abbreviated).

Essential Question: How is it possible to have a close relationship with God?

You will use your YAM Bible Study Workbook throughout this study and should bring it with you every day. When instructed, fill in the title page with your name.

Introduction:

As you do the Bible Study, refer to the storybook, You Are Mine. The two main characters of this book are Eli and Punchinello. We quickly come to see that Eli represents God and Punchinello represents us, humanity. The lessons Punchinello learns are often lessons we all need to learn. Of those lessons, the most important was for Punchinello to be assured of Eli's love and to trust Eli for his happiness. Punchinello came to understand that he is important not for what he has, but for *who* and *whose* he is. In the same way, we can be assured of God's love and learn to trust God for our happiness. Like Punchinello, we will come to know that we are important not for what we have but because of *who* and *whose* we are.

It's vital to note that the only way Punchinello could learn this lesson was to be in a close relationship with Eli. The same is true for us in our relationship with God. How is it possible to have a close relationship with God?

Bible Study:

Use the C.O.M.A. method of Scripture study under the headings: CONTEXT, OBSERVATION, MEANING and APPLICATION (also available in Appendix).

Do the following exercise in groups of 4-5. Someone in the group begins by reading aloud **Ephesians 2:1-13**. After reading the verse, you are to discuss the following C.O.M.A. questions under each section - Context, Observation and Meaning - and write your answers in your Workbook under the appropriate section.

Note: The **APPLICATION** portion of C.O.M.A. will be covered later at the end of the object lessons. When the exercise is completed, be prepared to share with the larger group.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Ephesians 3:1-13

"And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Therefore, remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands—remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

C.O.M.A. Method of Bible Study

CONTEXT

What is the context of this passage? You can find this out by asking yourself a few questions.

Who wrote this scripture?

Who is the intended audience?

Why was this written?

OBSERVATION

What are some of the things you can observe about the writing? You could look for some of these things:

Are there any phrases or words that stand out or are repeated?

What are the main points the text is making?

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

MEANING

Now it's time to figure out what this text means! It's pointless to read scripture if you don't wrestle with what it actually means. All of scripture is written to reveal to us who God is so that we may know Him and enjoy Him.

What does this passage teach you about God?

What does this passage teach you about yourself?

What does this passage teach you about having a close relationship with God?

APPLICATION (To be completed after the Object Lessons)

OBJECT LESSON

1) Faith - Chair Exercise

Faith is "complete trust or confidence in someone or something"
Your notes here:



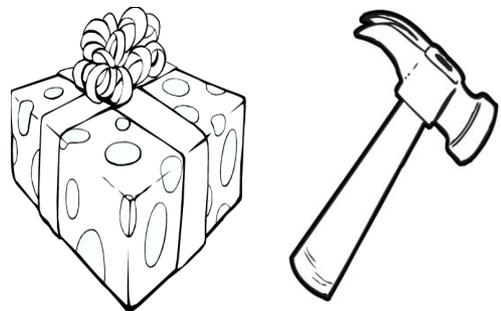
Romans 10:9

"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

OBJECT LESSON

2) Grace - Free Gift vs. Deserved Wage

Your notes here:



Ephesians 2:8-9:

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."

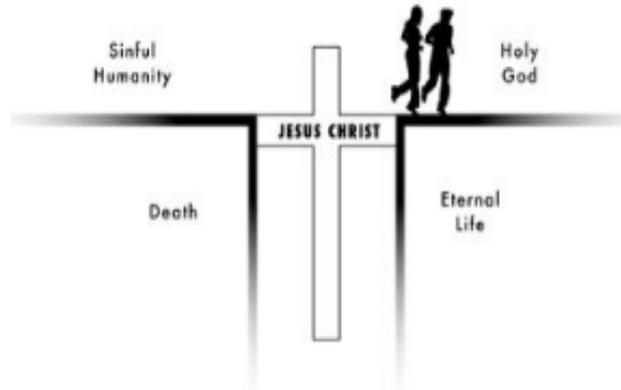
¹² <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/faith>

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

OBJECT LESSON

3) Not by Works - The Bridge to Life

Your notes here:



APPLICATION

Take a few minutes now to write response to **Ephesians 2:1-13**:

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

Scripture References

*Ephesians 2:1-13

Romans 10:9

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Lesson 1

Key Scripture: Mathew 6:21

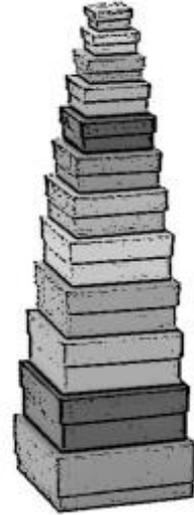
"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Essential Question: Is wanting wrong?

Key quote from the text: *"Don't you wish you had a new box?"*

Introduction:

You Are Mine focuses on the same character, Punchinello, and his village of Wemmicks, animated wooden puppets created by Eli the carpenter. In this particular story the author is trying to share an important realization about the meaning of success. Begin by first reading the story.



After reading You Are Mine, answer the following questions:
Who are the main characters?

What is the main plot and how is it resolved?

What is the moral of the story?

If you have read You Are Special or If Only I Had a Green Nose, how is this story similar? How is it different?

Vocabulary Definitions¹³

#1: Jealous (adj.) is

How does jealousy feel?

What does feeling jealous tell us about ourselves?

Is it wrong to feel jealous?

¹³ Definitions taken from Merriam-Webster's online dictionary, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Finish the sentence:

I feel JEALOUS when _____

Vocabulary Definitions

#2: Competitive (adj.) is

Why is competition so much fun? Or is it?

What does how we relate to competition tell us about ourselves?

When is it OK to want to win, or be the best, and when is it not OK?

Finish the sentence:

I feel COMPETITIVE when _____.

Vocabulary Definitions

#3: Greedy (adj.) is

Can you name a book or movie character that is greedy?

Is greedy a good feeling? Why or why not?

When do you feel greedy?

Finish the sentence:

I feel GREEDY when _____

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

For discussion:

How did jealousy enter into the competition?

What do you think Punchinello was *actually* competing for in this story?

How do we see Punch behaving in a *greedy* way?

Bible Study:

Explore what the Bible says about these three traits about which you just wrote. Working in small groups, read aloud the Scripture references and use your own words to summarize the meaning of each verse. If it were an emoji face, draw the emoji next to the word.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Vocabulary Bible Study

1. Jealous (adj.)

(Read each verse and summarize in your own words.)

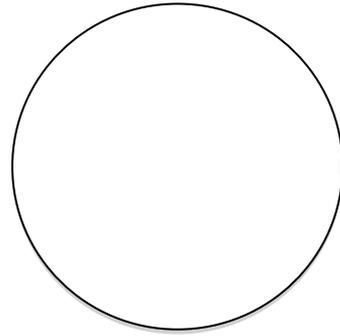
James 3:16 _____

Galatians 5:19-21 _____

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 _____

If jealousy had an emoji face,
what would it look like?

Draw the emoji on this page.



2. Competitive (adj.)

(Read each verse and summarize in your own words.)

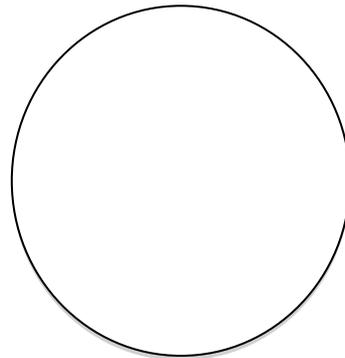
Philippians 2:3-4 _____

Galatians 6:4 _____

Colossians 3:23 _____

If competitive had an emoji face
what would it look like?

Draw the emoji on this page.



You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

3. Greedy (adj.)

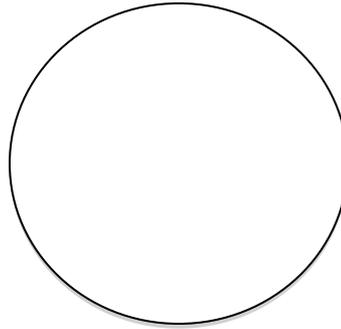
(Read and summarize the verses in your own words.)

1 Timothy 6:10 _____

Matthew 6:24 _____

Ecclesiastes 5:10 _____

If greedy had an emoji face
what would it look like?
Draw the emoji on this page.



Discuss your answers and then answer the following questions:

How did jealousy enter into the competition?

What do you think Punchinello was *actually* competing for in this story?

How do we see Punch behaving in a *greedy* way?

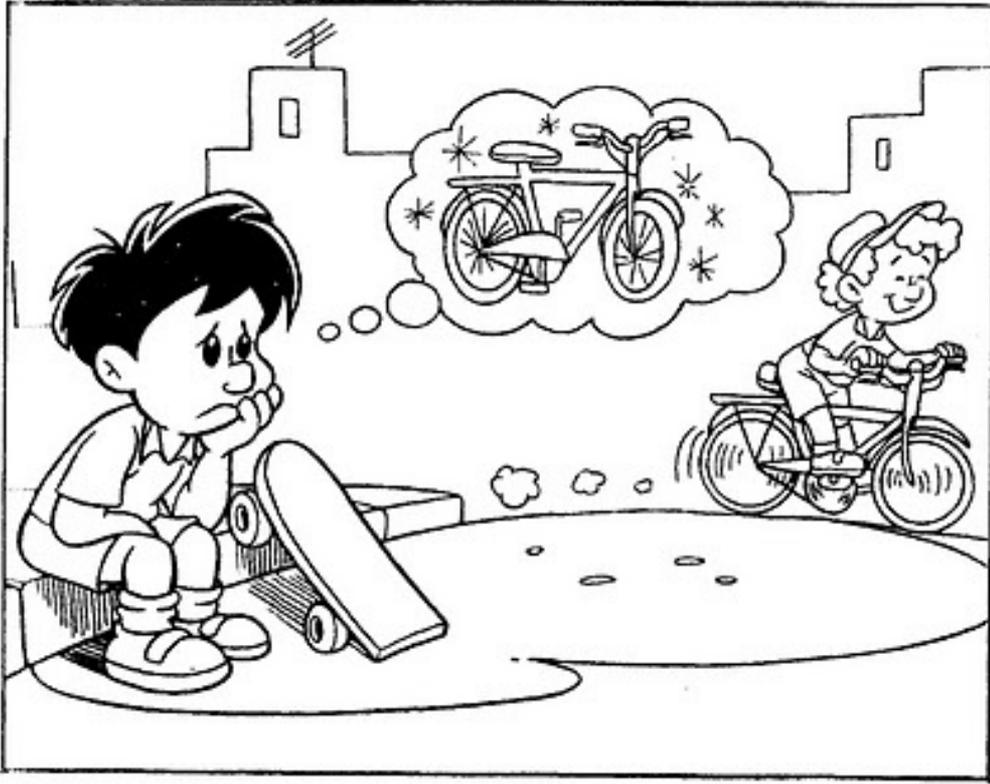
Exodus 20:17 states the last of the 10 Commandments is:

"Do not covet."

Covet means *(write the definition here):*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Refer to the cartoon below.



In groups of 4-5, read through the Scriptures associated with each question. Then answer the questions and be prepared to discuss with the class:

What does coveting imply about our understanding of God? (Matthew 7:7-11; Heb. 13:5-6)

What attitudes are at the root of coveting? (Luke 17:11-19; 2 Tim. 3:1-4)

How is coveting idol worship? (Matthew 6:19-24; Ps. 115:4-8)

How is coveting destructive to us? (James 3:14-16; 1 Tim. 6:9-10)

Excessive focus on the accumulation of material possessions, especially as a measure of worth, is a poor substitute for real meaning and value. Furthermore, obsessive focus on material wealth is seriously rebuked in the Bible.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Luke 12:15

And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

Is wanting wrong?

Listen carefully, and then fill in the blanks from memory when directed.

1. Philippians 4:19

"And my God will _____ need of yours according to _____ riches in glory in _____."

2. James 1:17

"Every _____ and every _____ gift is _____, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no _____ or _____ due to change."

3. Matthew 6:33

"But seek first _____ and his _____, and _____ these things shall be yours as well."

God desires to provide for His children and encourages us to ask for what we need.

But **James 4:1-3** gives us some further insight into asking:

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.



From these passages we can see that asking God for something is not necessarily bad. But James warns us to examine our motives before asking.

Psalm 37:4

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act."

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

What are some the desires of your heart?

Why is delighting in the Lord a prerequisite to receiving the desires of your heart?

How does Psalm 37:4 relate to the Key Scripture for this lesson (Matthew 6:21)?

Confession

Take a time of silent prayer. It's an ideal opportunity to confess any sins related to jealousy, unhealthy competitiveness, and greed.

Affirmation

Romans 8:1 says, *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Again, the provision of Jesus is enough to cleanse you from any sins of jealousy, unhealthy competitiveness, or greed. After all, Jesus Himself was tempted to be jealous, competitive for the wrong reasons and greedy, but was without sin (Hebrews 4:15)! The provision of Jesus is also enough to empower you to live a life of contentment and delight in the Lord (2 Peter 1:3). It is Jesus who has saved you and is now living in you for His glory and your good (Galatians 2:20)!

Faith in Action

Christians aren't simply supposed to hear God's Word, but do what it says (James 1:22). Identify one action point you can take as a result of the Bible Study and write it in your journal. It can be as simple as committing to congratulate your opponent when they beat you in a ping-pong match, or as intense as "fasting" from shopping malls for a month (*if the participant feels it is a place they consistently struggle with greed*). Remember, in Christ you are a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) and have power from God to live out His Word (Philippians 2:13)!

Leader closes in prayer.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Scriptural References

***Matthew 6:21**

James 3:14-16 *But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice.*

Galatians 5:19-21 *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 *Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful.*

Philippians 2:3-4 *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look, not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

Galatians 6:4 *But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.*

Colossians 3:23 *Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men.*

1 Timothy 6:9-10 *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

Matthew 6:19-24 *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*

Ecclesiastes 5:10 *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.*

Exodus 20:17

Matthew 7:7-11 *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!*

Hebrews 13:5-6 *Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So, we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?"*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Luke 17:11-19 *On the way to Jerusalem he was passing along between Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered a village, he was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When he saw them he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed turned back, praising God with a loud voice; **and** he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then Jesus answered, "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And he said to him, "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."*

2 Timothy 3:1-4 *But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, **heartless**, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, **treacherous**, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.*

Psalms 115:4-8 *Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.*

1 Timothy 6:9-10

Luke 12:15

Philippians 4:19

James 1:17

Matthew 6:33

James 4:1-3

Psalms 37:4-5

Romans 8:1

1 John 1:9

Hebrews 4:15 *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.*

2 Peter 1:3 *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His own glory and excellence.*

Galatians 2:20 *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*

James 1:22 *But show yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, anyone in Christ is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come!*

Philippians 2:13 *For it is God who works in you both to will and to act for His good purpose.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Lesson 2

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:28

"Those who trust in their riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf."

Essential Question: When is The Cost of Success Too High?

Key quote from story: *"Do you know how much your boxes and balls cost you?"*



Introduction:

Write out the definition of **Success** here:

In small groups discuss what it cost Punchinello in order to feel he had achieved success. Write your answers here:

Material costs?

Health costs?

Relational costs?

Spiritual costs?

Intrapersonal costs?

Punchinello had a lot of boxes and balls and a temporary feeling of importance.

What do you think of this quote made by a woman competing for a date on a TV dating game?

"I would rather cry in a BMW than smile on a bicycle." ¹⁴

¹⁴"I Would Rather Cry on a BMW than Smile on a Bicycle". Shiny Chinese. (1/17/2010). <http://www.shinychinese.com/i-would-rather-cry-in-a-bmw-than-smile-on-a-bicycle/>. Retrieved 11/1/16.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Complete the following chart on the "Cost of Success." After filling in one example for each column, come up with 5 more examples on your own.

Item Acquired (Success)	Sacrifice Made (Cost)	Worth It?		
		Yes	No	Maybe

The material, health, relational, spiritual and intrapersonal cost involved for Punchinello to have so many boxes and balls was not worth it. However, real life scenarios are usually not as black and white. There are some examples of success that are worth the cost, others that are not, and still others that may be worth it for only certain people, in certain situations, at certain times. Praise God that we have His Word, His Holy Spirit and His Church to help us discern when the cost of success is worth it, and when it is not.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Bible Study: His Word - His Holy Spirit - His Church

His Word

King Solomon was known as the wisest and richest king in history. Certainly, he experienced success on many levels. He owned expensive fleets of sailing ships that regularly brought back gold, silver, exotic animals, spices and valuable trade items from the known world. By today's standard he would be a multi-billionaire, far exceeding any list of the richest people in the world.



Do the Math: Calculate Solomon's riches based on 1 Kings 10:14: "Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold..."

Here are the facts you will need:

A talent weighs roughly 34.3 kilograms (75 U.S. pounds), which is equal to 1,094 troy ounces ($1094 \times 666 =$ _____ *total # of troy oz.*).

The current value of a troy ounce of gold is 8545 RMB (\$1268 USD). [$8545 \text{ RMB} \times (1094 \times 666)$] = *value of 666 talents of gold today*

Now, what is today's RMB value of what Solomon took in each year? _____.

Solomon ruled Israel for 40 years. Calculate total amount above and multiply by 40 _____.

Note verse 15: "[this amount was] besides that which came from the explorers and from the business of the merchants, and from all the kings of the west and from the governors of the land."

Again, Solomon was **very rich!** As such, one can look to his wisdom regarding success, especially acquiring wealth. Solomon's wisdom is found in the Book of Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. Here are select words of warning from Proverbs regarding wealth.

Write out the Scriptures and circle the one most meaningful to you.

Proverbs 11:4

Proverbs 11:28

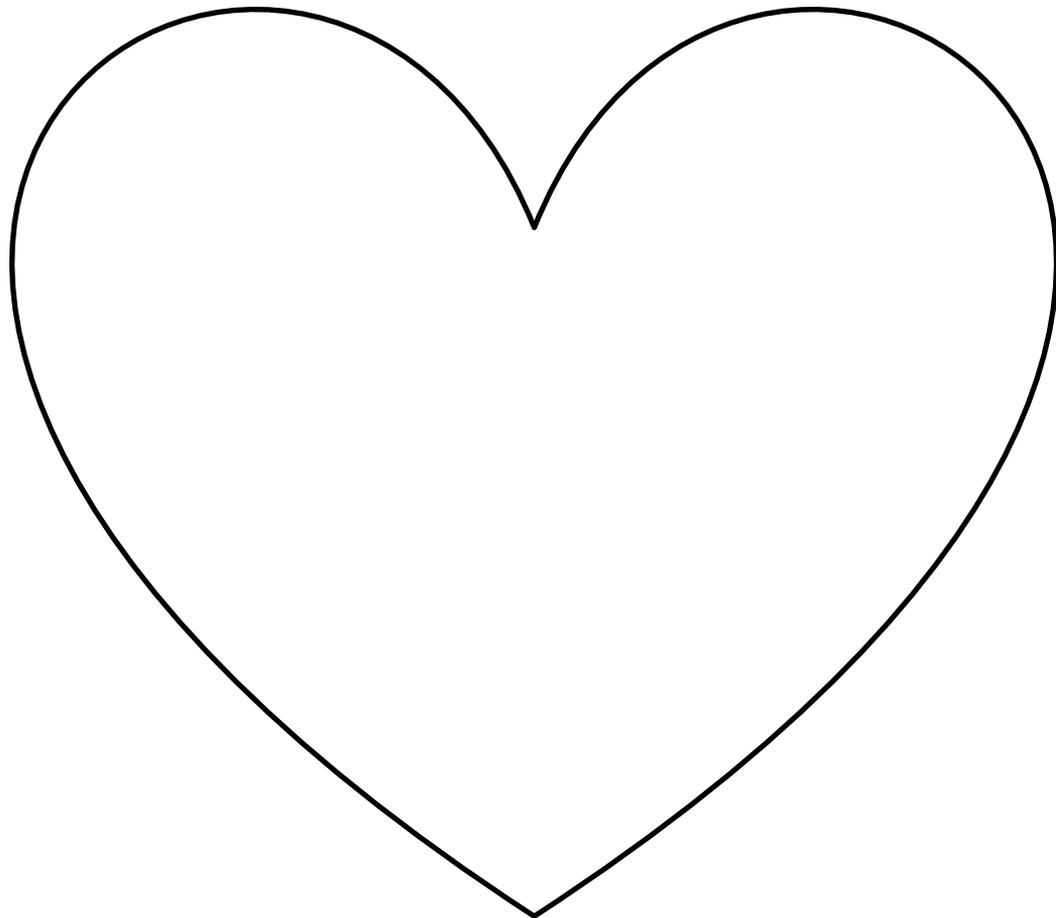
Proverbs 15:16

Proverbs 23:4-5

Proverbs 28:25

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

It is not bad to be wealthy, work diligently or experience success. God wants to



provide for all our needs. He commands us to work heartily and wants us to be wildly successful in the plans and purposes He has for us.

His Holy Spirit

Write down 5 areas where you would like to experience success (current or future). Then spend some time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to give you insight on these areas and if any need to be adjusted, eliminated, or expanded.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Within the heart write the desires for success that were confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

His Church

Now you can literally "share your heart" with your brothers and sisters in Christ!

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Scriptural References

Proverbs 11:28

1 Kings 10:14-15

Proverbs 11:4 *Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death.*

Proverbs 15:16 *In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked.*

Proverbs 23:4-5 *Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist. When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven.*

Proverbs 28:25 *A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the Lord will be enriched.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Lesson 3

Key Scripture: Hebrews 10:14

"By one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy."

Essential Question: What defines you?

Key quote from story: *"Did I create them to act that way?"*



Introduction:

What defines you? What do you value? Do your actions reflect your values?

Value Squares Activity

1. Identify people and things that are important to you.

Fold, crease, and cut the paper to make 16 squares. Unfold the paper, and use a ruler or the side of your desk to tear along the crease lines. Using the 16 squares, you should write a word or two to identify the following one example on each square:

Three activities (favorite things to do)

Five important people in their lives

Three dreams they have for the future

Two things they would like to own someday (possessions)

Three favorite possessions

Keep the squares in separate stacks on your desk, but combine the two things you want to own (D) with the possessions (E) into one stack. In other words, they should have four stacks: 3 activities, 5 people, 3 dreams, and 5 possessions.

2. Listen to an imaginary story and identify who and what you value most.

After you complete each part of the story, you will be asked to make a decision. You will have ten seconds to make the decision and discard a square, and all decisions are final. Discarded squares must be crumpled or torn up. Leader will read the "Once Upon a Time" Activity Sheet to you pausing for ten seconds for you to make a decision on which square to discard.

3. Reflect on your decisions and then discuss your results with the class.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Mini CORE VALUES EXERCISE

Journal Reflection: Using the Core Values Chart pick your top 8 values. Afterward, journal about how well your actions reflect your values.

Core Values Exercise

Step 1 Check off all those qualities or principles you think are most desirable.

Step 2 Go back again and limit this list to 8.

Step 3 Define each one.

Step 4 Rank them in order of importance. (Compare them in pairs and ask which one would you honor first in any given situation?)

Step 5 Place them in the Top Values Chart.

Accomplishment	Education	Independence	Pleasure
Accuracy	Environment	Equality	Power
Adventure	Integrity	Intelligence	Personal Growth
Approval	Excellence	Joy	Perseverance
Beauty	Fairness	Justice	Privacy
Challenge	Faith	Knowledge	Prosperity
Change	Family	Leadership	Punctuality
Cleanliness	Flexibility	Love	Purpose
Commitment	Freedom	Loyalty	Strength
Community	Friendship	Meaning	Success
Compassion	Fulfillment	Modesty	Teamwork
Confidence	Fun	Money	Tolerance
Competition	Generosity	Nature	Tradition
Confidence	Genuineness	Obedience	Trust
Creativity	Gratitude	Open-mindedness	Truth
Decisiveness	Hard work	Optimism	Variety
Determination	Harmony	Orderliness	Vitality
Discipline	Healing	Perfections	Wealth
	Honesty	Perseverance	Wisdom
	Honor		Zeal

*(Add any others not listed).

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

My Top Values

Priority or Rank	My Values
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

Use this space to journal:

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Bible Study:

Do your actions reflect your values?

In the story of You Are Mine, the Wemmick society acted on a core value of acquisition. This core value resulted in a false assumption that "Good Wemmicks have a lot. Not-so-good Wemmicks have a little." Find that line in the story and re-read the entire page for context. It seems funny to think that Wemmicks would consider others are good because they have a lot of balls or boxes. But, do we not act in a similar way?

We think well of people who have nice houses, are physically attractive, or hold degrees from prestigious universities. In the same way, we can look down upon people who are uneducated, unattractive, or don't have a hukou from a certain city.

The actions of the Wemmicks reflected their core values—no problem there. The problem was those values were not the values from which Eli created them to live.

Are you living by God's values?

God has a long list of values. From the fruit of the Spirit, to servanthood, hard work, and good character—the list could go on and on. However, His values can most simply be boiled down to four: belief, holiness, love of Him, and love of others.

Complete the Kingdom Report Card below and evaluate how well your actions reflect God's core values listed in the chart (1 is reflects very little, 10 is reflects perfectly).

Kingdom Self Awareness		
Name:		
God's Core Values	Assessment (1-10)	
Belief <i>Write John 6:29:</i>		
Holiness <i>Write out 1 Peter 1:16:</i>		
Love of God <i>Write out Matthew 22:37:</i>		
Love of Others <i>Write out Matthew 22:38:</i>		

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Write **Hebrews 10:14** here:

This verse is a bit confusing. How can something that's already been made perfect be made more holy? Praise God for the riches of His wisdom and His ways! The two theological concepts put forth in this verse are so helpful to understand the Christian life. **Positional sanctification** is the reality that God sees believers in Christ with the righteousness and perfection of Christ Himself. Once someone accepts Jesus as his or her Savior, God sees that person as fully sanctified. However, have you ever known a Christian that didn't have at least some areas to grow in? **Progressive sanctification** is the reality that even though Christians have been declared righteous and infused with the very perfection of Christ, they are going to have a life-long process of learning, growing, and refinement. Even though these truths don't seem like they can coexist, God says they can. In response, go back to your report card and in the second column write the grades Jesus would receive. Be encouraged and amazed that in Christ, God has already made you perfect!

What defines you?

In Wemmicksville people were mainly defined by the **external**—what they possess and their outward achievements. This is the world's way of defining people.

In what ways have you seen this in the world around you?

In what ways have you had personal experience?

Do you agree that defining people according to externals is overall a negative approach?

Even some people in the world have realized that this approach to defining themselves and others by outward appearances is negative. Their answer is to define people according to the **internal**—the character and core values of an individual. People that are kind, compassionate, or out to make the world a better place are subsequently defined as "good". Others not possessing such traits are consequently defined as "bad". That mindset may be fine for the world, but not for the Christian.

To answer the question, "What defines you?" we actually have to reject the question altogether! For the believer, it's not what defines you, but **who defines you?** Of course, the answer is none other than God Himself.

Refer to the "**Who I Am In Christ**" page. Read aloud one truth at a time until the entire list has been read.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Who I Am in Christ¹⁵

I Am Accepted

John 1:12	I am God's child.
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend.
Romans 5:1	I have been justified.
1 Corinthians 6:17	I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.
1 Corinthians 6:20	I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.
1 Corinthians 12:27	I am a member of Christ's body.
Ephesians 1:1	I am a saint.
Ephesians 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child.
Ephesians 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
Colossians 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
Colossians 2:10	I am complete in Christ; I Am Secure

I Am Secure

Romans 8:1,2	I am free from condemnation.
Romans 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good.
Romans 8:31-34	I am free from any condemning charges against me.
Romans 8:35-39	I cannot be separated from the love of God.
2 Corinthians 1:21,22	I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God.
Philippians 1:6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.
Philippians 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven.
Colossians 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God.
2 Timothy 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need.
1 John 5:18	I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

I Am Significant

Matthew 5:13,14	I am the salt and life of the earth.
John 15:1,5	I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life.
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
Acts 1:8	I am a personal witness of Christ.
1 Corinthians 3:16	I am God's temple.
2 Corinthians 5:17-21	I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
2 Corinthians 6:1	I am God's coworker (see 1 Cor. 3:9).
Ephesians 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.
Ephesians 2:10	I am God's workmanship.
Ephesians 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
Philippians 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

¹⁵ Anderson, N.T. "Victory Over Darkness", Bible Seven. bibleseven.com/b7-docs/victoryinchrist_synopsis.doc. Retrieved 11/1/16.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Confession

Take a time of silent prayer. It's an ideal opportunity to confess any sins related to this lesson. Have you fallen short of living by God's values? Have you defined yourself or others by the world's standards and not by God's?

Affirmation

Romans 8:1 says, *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Again, the provision of Jesus is enough to cleanse you from all shortcomings and sins! Embrace your position as being made perfect in Christ, and trust in His provision to experience even greater sanctification.

Faith in Action

Christians aren't simply supposed to hear God's Word, but do what it says (James 1:22). One powerful way for what you've learned to have a deep and lasting impact is to share your learning with others. Is there a friend that was unable to participate in this program that you could go over this lesson with? Would one of your family members enjoy doing the report card activity and having you explain the awesome theological concepts of positional and progressive sanctification? You may not have a seminary degree, but you've got the Word of God and His Holy Spirit to guide you!

Leader closes in prayer.

Scriptural References

*** Hebrews 10:14**

John 6:29 *Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."*

1 Peter 1:15-16 *But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."*

Matthew 22:37-38 *And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment."*

Romans 8:1

Hebrews 10:14

1 John 1:9

James 1:22 *But show yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Once Upon a Time Story

(To be used with Valuable Squares Exercise)

1. While at the zoo, you were bitten by a rare species of monkey. You are starting to feel very sick, and your doctor diagnoses you with a very serious illness. Your doctor is unsure of how to cure you, and doesn't know whether the disease is fatal. He tells you that you have to give up one of the things you like to do (**discard 1 activity**).
2. Because of the disease, you are hospitalized for a short time. Your career suffers, and you lose two of the things you wanted from your future or career (**discard 1 dream and 1 future possession**).
3. Because of your time off from work, you are short of cash and have to sell one of your possessions (**discard 1 possession**).
4. You are hospitalized again. Your doctor requires you to give up another activity (**discard 1 activity**) and limit your visits with friends (**give up 1 relationship**).
5. You are exhausted from the illness and trying to work. You lose two more career items (**discard 2 dreams**) and must give up an activity (**discard 1 activity**). Also, another friend disappears from your life because you no longer seem able to maintain relationships (**discard 1 relationship**).
6. You are permanently hospitalized. You are only allowed one visitor and can take only one possession to the hospital with you. (**Discard 1 important person, and 1 possession**).
7. Your doctor finds a hospital in Europe that specializes in rare monkey bites. Once there, you will have to live near the hospital for the rest of your life in case you ever suffer from symptoms again. Because you have to be at the hospital immediately, you can only take one person or possession. Which one will it be (**eliminate 1 possession and 1 relationship**)?
8. You are starting your life over again with only this person or possession.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Lesson 4

Key Scripture: Proverbs 11:24

"One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want."

Essential Question: Am I a bucket or a pipe?¹⁶

Key quote from story: *"Perhaps you should give them to someone who needs them."*



Introduction:

A Bucket or a Pipe?

What is a bucket used for? How does a pipe work?

On the next Workbook page, labeled "Bucket/Pipe", draw a Venn diagram. In pairs, discuss your thoughts about how a bucket and a pipe are different and alike (the center area is for shared traits) and fill in the Venn diagram. After you have completed the Venn diagram, be prepared to share with the whole group.

What do these two items have to do with giving?

Leader continues:

See the Difference?

Let's look at the Dead Sea as a type of "bucket" and the Sea of Galilee as a type of "pipe." A bucket holds and a pipe channels water.

The **Dead Sea** in Israel is also known as the "Killer Sea" because it has no marine life. Why is that? The answer: Measuring 67 km long, 18 km wide and 377 meters deep, it is one of the saltiest bodies of water on earth; it is almost 9 times saltier than normal ocean water. This level of salt content doesn't allow marine flora or fauna to survive. Why is this body of water so salty and uninhabitable? While it receives vital water from the Jordan River, the Dead Sea keeps all that water to itself and never flows out. Because it is below the mean sea level there are no outlets. Over the days and weeks water evaporates off the surface leaving the salts behind and, in the process creates a very salty and uninhabitable environment, thus its deadly nickname.

¹⁶ Link, Jay E.K. "Are You Living Like A 'Bucket' or a 'Pipe'?" Stewardship Ministries". <https://vimeo.com/23162374>. Retrieved October 21, 2016.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

**BUCKET OR PIPE?
Venn Diagram**

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

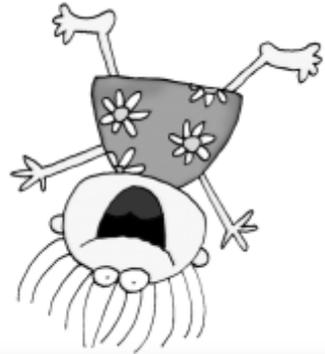
On the other hand, we have the **Sea of Galilee** that also receives water from the same Jordan River. While small in comparison to the Dead Sea, it is rich in sea life having over 20 types of fish. For centuries, it has been a wealth of resources to fishermen and industries on and around the sea. Why is this sea so alive and vital? The answer is the water it receives flows out constantly, thus it is continually receiving a fresh supply.

What do you think is the message here?

Bible Study:

Write out **Proverbs 11:24** under your Venn diagram.

This proverb suggests that God has it backward! How is it possible to give freely and grow richer? How is it possible to keep your resources and have less? It seems to defy the laws of physics! Nonetheless, Proverbs is true. Biblical giving is not natural but *supernatural*. Let's look at some examples.



Look up these Bible stories.

Read the verses and answer the questions under each heading:

1.) The Widow of Zarephath

What did she give? (1 Kings 17:8-13)

What did she receive? (1 Kings 17:16, 23)

2.) Mary

What did she give? (Luke 1:30-38)

What did she receive? (Luke 1:46-55)

3.) Jesus

What did he give? (Philippians 2:5-8)

What did he receive? (Philippians 2:9-11)

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Our Triune God is the ultimate example of generosity. God the Father started with giving His ONLY Son to us. Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice for us and sent the Holy Spirit as a gift from the Father. The Holy Spirit gives us the Father's Kingdom and sanctifies us daily. What an amazing cycle of generosity! As we bear out God's image, we too can reflect same generous heart and nature!

After reading the verse, write the answers to these questions:

What belongs to God? (See **Psalm 24:1.**)

What should we give back? (See **Hebrews 12:28.**)

What should be our attitude in giving? (See **2 Corinthians 9:7.**)

In the 1800's, Amy Carmichael gave her life to work with the poor and abandoned children in India. She said,

"You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."

1 Corinthians 13:3:

"If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

What does love have to do with giving? The only giving that matters in God's kingdom is giving done in love.

Why do we love (not how, but why)? 1 John 4:19 says;

"We love because he first loved us."

Yes, God loves us! What's more, His love to us and through us has a transformative nature and is linked with all sorts of benefits. As Christians, we know we were made to be a pipe and not a bucket; we know it is more blessed to flow with giving rather than hoard what we receive (Acts 20:35b). We have experienced the joy of giving and want to do it more and more! But, did you know that even science tells us there are positive benefits to giving? Let's play a game to discover just what science says are the benefits God has embedded in the act of generosity.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Game: Treasure Hunt

Why Generosity Is Good For Your Health¹⁷

Generosity has natural and supernatural returns.

List the reasons you discovered in the Treasure Hunt.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

¹⁷ Chan, A. "7 Science-Backed Reasons Why Generosity Is Good For Your Health." The Huffington Post (12/1/20013). http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/01/generosity-health_n_4323727.html. Retrieved 10/31/16.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

“Time, Talent, Material Resources Inventory”

It’s easy to think of material things you might have to give away, but what if you don’t have any material things or money?

What are some examples of things that don’t cost anything to give? Work on your own and fill in the chart with 4 or more examples. Be prepared to share your chart.

My Time, Talent, or Material Resources	Acts of Generosity
Ex. I have Saturdays free.	I can help with household chores.
Ex. I sing or play an instrument.	I can offer to entertain at seniors’ homes. I can help someone who is learning to play my instrument.

Remember, as God’s image bearers, we can give back: be generous by giving of ourselves, our time, our listening ear, our forgiveness, our love.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Confession

Take a time of silent prayer. It's an ideal opportunity to confess if you've been acting more like a bucket than a pipe or if you have missed the importance of loving while giving.

Affirmation

2 Corinthians 5:14 says that those of you in Christ are compelled by His love. He died so that you could live for Him. If you haven't been living for Him, let me remind you of His great love once again. Let me bless you to receive that love, repent of your sins and start afresh in His power today. You love because He first loved you. You are generous, because He was first generous with you. In Christ, you are a pipe flowing with your time, many talents, and material resources moving through you to bless your friends and family, your church and community, your country, and this world. Amen and amen.

Faith in Action

Christians aren't simply supposed to hear God's Word, but do what it says (James 1:22). Identify one action point you can take as a result of the Bible Study and write it in your Workbook. It can be as simple as arranging to babysit for your younger siblings so your parents can have a date or as serious as committing a portion of your allowance or earnings to a church or community project. Remember you don't obey God to be loved...you obey God because you're already loved! And, you obey with the power He supplies (Philippians 2:13)!

Action point I can take:

Leader closes in prayer.

Scriptural References

* **Proverbs 11:24**

1 Kings 17:8-16 *Then the word of the LORD came to him, "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, "Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand." And she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die." And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.'" And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Luke 1:30-38 *And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.*

Luke 1:46-55 *And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."*

Philippians 2:5-13 *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

Psalms 24:1 *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.*

Hebrews 12:28 *Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.*

2 Corinthians 9:7 *Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

1 Corinthians 13:3 *If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.*

1 John 4:19

Acts 20:35b *It is more blessed to give than to receive.*

2 Corinthians 5:14 *For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died.*

James 1:22 *But show yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.*

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Lesson 5

Key Scripture: Psalm 24:1

"The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein."

Essential Question: What is proper stewardship?

Key quote from the story:
"You're important not for what you have but for who you are. You are mine."



Introduction:

The **Story of the Good Steward** in Luke 12:42-48:

"And the Master replied, 'I'm talking to any faithful, sensible man whose master gives him the responsibility of feeding the other servants. If his master returns and finds that he has done a good job, there will be a reward—his master will put him in charge of all he owns. But if the man begins to think, 'My Lord won't be back for a long time,' and begins to whip the men and women he is supposed to protect, and to spend his time at drinking parties and in drunkenness—well, his master will return without notice and remove him from his position of trust and assign him to the place of the unfaithful. He will be severely punished, for though he knew his duty he refused to do it. But anyone who is not aware that he is doing wrong will be punished only lightly. Much is required from those to whom much is given, for their responsibility is greater.'"

Write the definition of **STEWARDSHIP**:

At the onset of the creation of humanity, God asked Adam and Eve to steward the earth. Many people approach stewardship of the earth from a place of domination. Since humans are the most intelligent life form on earth, they feel it's their right to treat the earth however they wish. Not only is the perspective short-sided for everyone, but also for the Christian it is unbiblical.

Genesis 1:26

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.'"

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Did any of you hear an alternative to domination in this verse?

Domination vs. Dominion

Domination is

Dominion is

While the two seem similar because both involve a type of control, they are vastly different. One takes power over others or over creation from a place of self-interest alone. The other involves a nurturing power over others or over creation with the end purpose of benefiting all involved.

Why do you think God commanded *dominion* rather than *domination*?
How does dominion reflect God's character?

Domination says:

I deserve this.

I am in charge.

I believe it should be my way.

I will make it happen.

History shows that domination can lead to cruelty and destruction.

Dominion says:

I do not deserve this.

What a privilege I have!

I believe in something bigger than me.

I will help this to develop carefully.

History shows that dominion can lead to generosity and growth.

Again, dominion is a proper stewardship perspective. Proper stewardship, at its root, is a matter of respect for one's self and others. It means that we are to carefully and responsibly manage what is entrusted to us for the greater good.

Actually, ***stewardship at its core is actually about relationship*** more than material things. Someone (i.e., the Master from the story) entrusts something (i.e., material goods or activity) to another (i.e. servant/steward) who acts as his/her agent.

By now it should be apparent that we are managers, not owners of this world and its resources. But even more profound is the knowledge that we belong to God.

Bible Study (60 min.):

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

In You Are Mine, Eli says to Punchinello, "You are special -important- because you are *mine*."

What does it mean to belong to God?

There are many facets of belonging to God. We will focus on 3 primary aspects. In the following exercise, you will have the opportunity to discover what Scriptures say about: 1.) God's ownership of us, 2.) Our relationship with him, 3.) The resulting benefits.



Ownership	Relationship	Benefit

After the class exercise, place these verses in the column where they belong:

- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20
- Psalms 139:1-6
- John 15:15
- 2 Corinthians 1:20
- Hebrews 4:14-15
- Romans 8:15
- Psalms 100:3
- Romans 14:8
- 1 Corinthians 2:9
- Ephesians 1:3
- 1 Peter 1:3-4
- Psalms 24:1

Now, from a place of understanding more of what it means to belong to God, let's consider stewardship further.

Write out our Key Scripture **Psalms 24:1**:

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

“Stewardship Top Ten”

Think of all the things you have to steward for God. These can be time, talents, material resources, relationships, your hopes for the future and more. Then, write down what you feel are the ten most important items for you to steward for God.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Consider the following five questions as we look at stewarding the gospel well. Feel free to take notes here under each question as we talk.

- 1) What does it mean to steward the gospel?
- 2) Why do Christians need to steward the gospel?
- 3) Is there additional reason for stewarding the gospel?
- 4) What are the benefits of the gospel to those that receive it?
- 5) How do I share the gospel?

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

What does it mean to steward the gospel? Going back to the last lesson, it basically means that we act as a pipe with the gospel, not a bucket. We don't keep it for ourselves; we happily and eagerly share it with others. In short, stewarding the gospel well is about sharing the gospel.

Why do Christians need to steward the gospel?

- God entrusted Christians with this job. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.)
- God commands it. (Read Mark 16:15.)

Is there additional motivation for stewarding the gospel?

- It is the power of God. (Romans 1:16)
- It is the only hope for salvation. (Acts 4:12)

What are the benefits of the gospel to those that receive it?

- Think about what you learned from the last exercise we did.
- Think back even further to the "Who I Am in Christ" handout.

How do Christians share the gospel?

Have any of you bought a product recently that you were so excited about? Did you tell/text/message/WeChat or show anyone what you bought?

When we are truly excited about something, we can't help but share it. It comes quite naturally. However, there are many obstacles working against you sharing the gospel. So, don't feel discouraged if you have a bit of fear or intimidation. Remember, God has called you to do this, and whenever He calls, He empowers!

There are many approaches to sharing the gospel: church-wide outreaches, cold-call evangelism, street preaching, etc. Most approaches can be fruitful when done with **love** and under the **guidance of the Holy Spirit**. Many approaches were demonstrated by Jesus, His Disciples, and the early church. However, Jesus did seem to have a preference for "relational evangelism." Let's discuss the aspects of relational evangelism listed below and your thoughts about sharing the gospel.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Here are 3 easy steps¹⁸ you can always use that don't require major seminary study. Makes some notes if you want.

Follow Christ. Let your life and actions be a witness of Christ to others. Can you give an example of someone whose life is a witness?

Share your story. What has Christ done for you? Be real, not phony! As an exercise, take time to write out your testimony (*Guide from Acts 22:3-21 on Sharing Testimony*).

Invite other people into your story. Jesus won over people one-by-one, genuinely loving and caring about people. This takes time and commitment. Start by praying for those you know!

Stewarding the gospel well is as much about sharing it as it is sharing it **accurately**. Many people are confused about what it really means to be a Christian, how one can be saved, and whether or not that salvation can be lost. Think back to Lesson 0 and the importance of communicating the truth that salvation is by grace through faith. Think about how it was only the sacrifice of Christ that allowed you to be close to God, not your own efforts. Think about the awesome reality that you were once dead in your sins and through the gospel have been made alive in Christ!

In conclusion, while many in the world are rightfully concerned about environmental issues, as Christians we also have an eternal perspective. We can commit to being good stewards of the earth, but in light of the power and eternal significance of the gospel, it is clearly one of the most important areas of stewardship.

Confession

It's time for confession again. You will now have a time of silent prayer. It's an ideal opportunity to confess any sins related to poor stewardship of the gospel or any other area where the Holy Spirit has brought conviction.

Affirmation

We looked at Hebrews 4:14-15 earlier, but let's go a bit further and receive encouragement with verse 16 as well: *"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."* God's mercy, grace and help are available to us at this very moment. You are His gospel ambassador (2 Corinthians 5:18-20), a job you were made for and empowered to do! (Acts 1:8)

¹⁸ Reed, B. Excerpted from "How to Share the Gospel", Lifeway Young Adults. October 29, 2014. <http://youngadults.lifeway.com/2014/10/3-easy-ways-to-share-the-gospel/>. Retrieved September 14, 2015

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Faith in Action

Christians aren't simply supposed to hear God's Word but do what it says (James 1:22). Identify one action point you can take as a result of the Bible Study and write it in your journal. It can be as simple as writing out your testimony or as intense as committing to share the gospel with at least one friend or family member by the end of the week.

Leader closes in prayer.

Scriptural References Lesson 5

*** Psalm 24:1**

Luke 12:42-48

Genesis 1:26

Psalm 100:3 *Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.*

Romans 14:8 *For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.*

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *Or 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, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

Psalm 139:1-6 *O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.*

John 15:15 *No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.*

Romans 8:15 *For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"*

Hebrews 4:14-16

1 Corinthians 2:9 *What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love Him.*

2 Corinthians 1:20 *For all the promises of God find their Yes in Him. That is why it is through Him that we utter our Amen to God for His glory.*

Ephesians 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.*

1 Peter 1:3-4 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you.*

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2 Corinthians 5:18-20 *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to Himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

Mark 16:15 *And he said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation..."*

Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

Acts 4:12 *And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*

Acts 1:8 *But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

James 1:22 *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

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Lesson 6 EXTENDED LEARNING

Key Scripture: Ephesians 2:10,

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk them.

Essential Question: How can I make a difference?

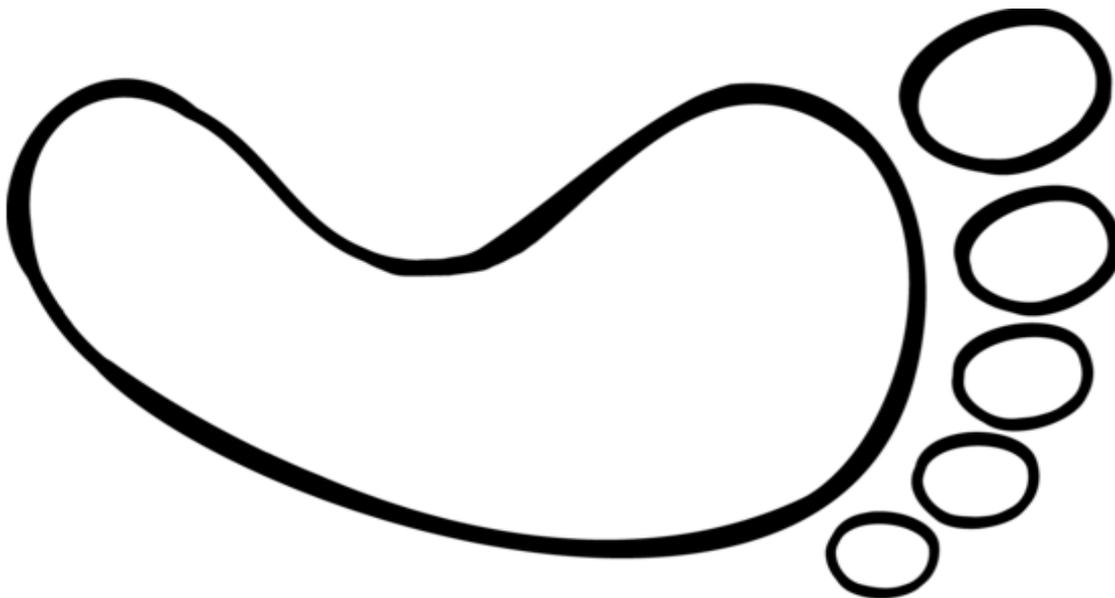
Key quote from story: *"I'll be the highest with the most."*

Introduction:

Your notes from Activity: Trashy Subject:



Inside the footprint write the definition of **Consumerism**¹⁹ as instructed.



¹⁹ Definition of "Consumerism" from Oxford Online Dictionaries.
<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/consumerism>. Retrieved 10/18/16

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Bible Study: Consuming vs. Creating

Let's Get Creative! Many global activists see a future of doom and gloom for our planet, but they don't take into account mankind's creativity and ingenuity. Without a doubt, we MUST be responsible consumers. However, we also need to cultivate creativity and ingenuity with the hope that we will develop inspiring solutions to today's global issues. Imagine, you could be the one to discover the next reusable fuel source, or you could invent a device that changes the way wireless signals are transmitted!

Aspiration like that may seem overwhelming or out of your reach, but as Christians we are encouraged knowing that God is good, and gives us good gifts of which creativity is one. Below is a sermon by Ray Fowler entitled, "God's Good Gift of Creativity." It can be found at the following web address: <http://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/gods-good-creation-series/gods-good-gift-of-creativity/>.

After reading the sermon you will discuss the questions at the end.

Sermon "God's Good Gift of Creativity" by Ray Fowler

Introduction

Our text in Exodus takes place immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments. Moses has ascended to the top of Mount Sinai where God has just given him detailed instructions concerning the tabernacle. And now in chapter 31 God tells Moses how the building of the tabernacle is to be accomplished.

Exodus 31:1-6 *Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezaleel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts — to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship. Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also, I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you."*

So what is creativity and where does it come from? When God created the world, he created man and woman in his own image. He told them to be fruitful and multiply and to rule over all that he had created. As part of that rule God had Adam name the animals. This was one of the first recorded creative acts of man. He also placed Adam and Eve in the garden and gave them work to do. That work involved thinking, planning and decision making, all of which are aspects of the creative process.

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After the fall, we find that mankind's creativity continued, although it was now stained by sin. In the early chapters of Genesis we see the rise of agriculture, the building of cities, the forging of tools and even the beginning of music. We read in **Genesis 4:21** that "Jubal ... was the father of all who play the harp and flute." In short, we find the beginnings of human culture, as man began to put into practice the creative gifts that God had given him to fulfill his task of ruling over creation. And so God, the creator, is the source of all creativity. And in creating man in his own image, he gave man gifts of creativity also.

Our text has to do with a very practical matter. God is telling Moses who will be in charge of building the tabernacle. But the text also contains four very important principles for us as we consider God's good gift of creativity.

I. God chooses to whom he gives gifts. (1-2)

The first thing we learn from our text this morning is that God chooses to whom he gives gifts. Look at verses 1-2: "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.'" The word translated "chosen" in this verse is a word that means, "called or commissioned." You have heard of people commissioning artwork to be done before. Well, here God commissions Bezalel son of Uri for the work of overseeing the building of the tabernacle. God had gifted Bezalel for this task. God chooses to whom he gives gifts.

We find this principle throughout Scripture. It is true of spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul lists a number of the gifts and then he says, "All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines." (**1 Corinthians 12:11**) **Hebrews 2:4** also speaks of "gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will."

But spiritual gifts are only one example of this. God is the giver of all gifts, and he chooses which gifts to give to whom. God did not create everyone the same. To some he gives artistic ability, to others musical ability, to others the ability to make things with their hands. God in his wisdom gave you exactly the creative gifts that he wanted you to have. Your gifts are part of who you are. They are part of the person that God created you to be. And so we should receive those gifts with thanksgiving and use them to the best of our ability.

Some people don't like the gifts that they have. They would rather trade them in for someone else's gifts. But that displays a lack of faith in God. We read in Isaiah 45: "Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?'" (**Isaiah 45:9**) But isn't that exactly what we are doing when we question the gifts that God has given us? Are we not saying, "God, why did you make me this way? God, why did you give me this set of gifts? Why didn't you give me those gifts instead?" God chooses to whom he gives gifts, and so we should not disparage our own gifts from God, nor should we envy the gifts of others.

II. God gives knowledge, skill, ability and craftsmanship. (3)

The second thing we learn from our text this morning is that God gives knowledge, skill, ability and craftsmanship. Look at Exodus 31 again: "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts." (**Exodus 31:2-3**)

I find it interesting that God says, "I have filled him with the Spirit of God to do all these things." Throughout Scripture we continually find God's Spirit involved in creative acts. When God first created the world, we read in **Genesis 1:2** that "the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters." When God created man, we read in **Genesis 2:7**: "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." That word "breathed" calls to mind God's spirit. What is the breath of God if not the Spirit of God? When you become a Christian, you become a new creation in Christ. How? Jesus said you are born again, which he also called being "born of the Spirit." (**John 3:8**) He was referring back to Ezekiel 36 where God said, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (**Ezekiel 36:26-27**) The Holy Spirit is part of all of God's creative acts, and so it should not surprise us that God also gives us our creative gifts through the Holy Spirit.

Apparently this man, Bezalel, was a master craftsman. He was filled with the Spirit of God in knowledge, skill and ability to do the work of building the tabernacle. God had clearly chosen Bezalel for this task long before he revealed it to Moses. Moses didn't just walk down the mountain and find that Bezalel could suddenly do all these things. God doesn't work that way. God had been preparing Bezalel all along. And Bezalel would have had to work hard to develop those gifts as well. Still, God had chosen him for this task, and with that in mind, he had "filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability and knowledge in all kinds of crafts."

Now we are not all going to be like a Bezalel. It seems that Bezalel was an extraordinarily gifted man. You and I will probably not attain to the same level of skill and mastery that Bezalel obviously had. And that's okay. God not only chooses to whom he gives gifts; he also chooses how much of any gift he gives to each person. But the point is this. Whatever knowledge, skill and ability you have comes from God. **James 1:17** says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father." (**James 1:17**) Paul asked the Corinthians, "What do you have that you did not receive?" (**1 Corinthians 4:7**) God is the giver of all good gifts, and so we should never take a wrongful pride in the talents and gifts that he has given us.

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I taught guitar and piano for many years, and one thing I learned quickly was that there were some people who had a special aptitude for music that others just did not. For some people rhythm and timing came naturally, whereas for others they just never seemed to get it. Some people take to an instrument or an activity in a special way. They have a certain facility for writing or drawing or electronics or computers where it just comes easy for them. We often call them “naturals” but there is nothing natural about it. God gives us those abilities. It is a gift from God.

Do you have knowledge in a certain area? Do you have special abilities? Do you have skills that you have been able to develop beyond what the average person can do in that area? God gave that to you. It comes from him. God gave you your creative abilities, and you need to honor him with the gifts he has given you. God gives knowledge, skill, ability and craftsmanship.

III. God gives a wide variety of creative gifts. (4-5)

The third thing we learn from our text this morning is that God gives a wide variety of creative gifts. Going back to Exodus 31, look at verses 4-5. When God gifted Bezalel, he gave him knowledge, skill and ability “to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.” (**Exodus 31:4-5**)

Bezalel wasn't just given one gift, say, the ability to work with gold. Bezalel was skilled in many mediums – gold, silver and bronze. He knew how to cut stones and place them in beautiful settings. He understood carpentry and how to work with wood. Apparently he knew much more, because verse five finally stops listing all his different skills and just says he was able to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.

God gave Bezalel a wide variety of gifts. And that was all just one person! **Romans 12:6** says, “We [all] have different gifts, according to the grace given us.” God in his grace gives a wide variety of gifts to all people everywhere.

And so when we think of creative gifts, we should not limit ourselves to just thinking about the creative arts – painting, sculpture, writing, music, dance, design, photography, and so on. All of human endeavor involves creative gifts and abilities, from a simple setting of the table for dinner to the building of a vast cathedral.

Every person here today is a creative person. It's true. Anytime you put part of yourself into a task or project you are being creative. Anytime you organize or decorate something you are being creative. Anytime you solve a problem you are being creative. Anytime you inject humor into a situation you are being creative. Anytime you apply the knowledge, ability and skill that God has given you to the task at hand, you are being creative.

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So when you think about creativity, don't just think about the arts! God gives a wide variety of creative gifts, and he has given creative gifts to you, too. And there is a reason God gave you the specific gifts that make you who you are.

IV. God's gifts have a purpose. (6)

And that leads us to our fourth and final point this morning. God's gifts have a purpose. Look at verse 6 where God expands the creative task for building the tabernacle beyond just Bezalel: "Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also, I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you." (**Exodus 31:6**)

Why did God give Bezalel and Oholiab and all the other craftsmen their specific skills? I am sure they used those skills for many other things as well, but God also had a specific purpose in mind for them. God had given them all the particular skills they needed in order to build the tabernacle, and not just to build it, but to build it according to God's exact specifications, as God told Moses, "to make everything I have commanded you."

God gives creative gifts for a purpose. Part of that purpose is simply for us to fulfill our role as human beings made in the image of God. Listen to what theologian Abraham Kuyper says about this:

"As image-bearer of God, man possesses the possibility both to create something beautiful and to delight in it. ... The world of sounds, the world of forms, the world of tints, and the world of poetic ideas, can have no other source than God; and it is our privilege as bearers of his image, to have a perception of this beautiful world, artistically to reproduce, and humanly to enjoy it." (Abraham Kuyper; Calvinism, pp. 142,156-157)

A strong, biblically based creational theology encourages us as Christians to get involved in all areas of life. Too often we think of Christianity only in terms of the Bible, prayer, and church on Sunday mornings. But as important as all those things are, the Christian life is so much bigger than that. Christianity is all about being human to the glory of God. And so that means taking all that God has created in this world and all of human culture and creativity and then returning it to God in praise. As Paul says in 1 Timothy 4, "Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." (**1 Timothy 4:4**) Otherwise, Christian faith becomes divorced from real life, and we lose our real influence as Christians in the world.

The best book I have ever read on this whole theme of Christian interaction with culture and creativity and the arts was written by the Dutch art history professor, H. R. Rookmaaker. The book is called, Art Needs No Justification. It is a thin little paperback, only 60 pages long, and for me it was life changing. It opened my eyes to the incredible importance of the doctrine of creation for the church as a whole. Listen to some of his analysis of how Christianity began to lose its influence in society in the eighteenth century.

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Rookmaaker writes:

"The mainstream of Christianity turned to a kind of pietism in which the idea of the covenant, as preached in the books of Moses and throughout the whole of Scripture, was bypassed. The Old Testament was often neglected, and the meaning of the Christian life was narrowed to that of the devotional life alone. Too easily, large areas of human reality, such as philosophy, science, the arts, economics and politics were handed over to the world, as Christians concentrated mainly on pious activities."

"If the world's system was a secularized one, missing true spirituality, the Christian's attitude also became a reduced one, missing its foundation in reality, being uninterested in the created world. It sometimes became a ghostlike spirituality without a body. Christians have indeed been active. But they have often optimistically believed that it was enough to preach the gospel and to help in a charitable way. In concentrating on saving souls they have forgotten that God is the God of life and that the Bible teaches people how to live, how to deal with our world, God's creation. The result is that even though many people became Christians, nevertheless our world became totally secularized with almost no Christian influence." (Rookmaaker; *Art Needs No Justification*, pp. 17-18)

The church lost its *influence* in the world, because it lost *interest* in the world that God created. How sad! As Christians, we should not only be interested in Christianity. We should be interested in everything! C.S. Lewis once wrote:

"I believe that any Christian who is qualified to write a good popular book on any science may do much more good by that than by any directly apologetic work. ... What we want is not more little books about Christianity, but more little books by Christians on other subjects." (Lewis; *God in the Dock*, 'Christian Apologetics')

I thought about that when I started up my blog. The tagline for my blog reads: "Thoughts on God and life from a Christian perspective." That was very intentional. I could have limited my blog specifically to Christian topics and themes only, but I knew that would also have limited my audience. And so I chose to write about anything that interested me – books, music, movies, science, technology, politics, parenting, family life, and so on. And you know what has happened? All sorts of people visit the blog. Somebody searching for information on a recent movie like "3:10 to Yuma" arrives at the blog, reads the post, then looks around and discovers other articles of interest. I don't specifically mention God or Christ in every post, because I don't have to. All of life belongs to God. Anyone who reads the blog will soon discover that I am a Christian because that is just part of who I am, and it comes out naturally in the blog as a whole. Isn't that the way it should work in all areas of our lives?

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Listen to H. R. Rookmaaker once again:

“Very often we have created barriers against hearing the gospel because we preached that we care for people and that this world is God’s but we did not act on those principles. Our lack of care showed that we were not really interested in people or in God’s creation. ...

“We should remind ourselves that Christ did not come to make us Christians or to save our souls only but that he came to redeem us that we might be human in the full sense of that word. To be new people means that we can begin to act in our full, free, human capacity in all facets of our lives. Therefore to be a Christian means that one has humanity, the freedom to work in God’s creation and to use the talents God has given to each of us, to his glory and to the benefit of our neighbors. Therefore, if we have artistic talents, they should be used.” (Rookmaaker; *Art Needs No Justification*, pp. 19-20). Beyond the general overall purpose of reflecting the image of God in society by exercising your creative gifts, God also has some specific purposes for the gifts he has given you. Going back to the tabernacle in Exodus 31, God had a very specific purpose for the creative gifts he gave to Bezalel and Oholiab. How about for New Testament believers today?

Ephesians 2:10 says that “we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (**Ephesians 2:10**) Isn’t that awesome? Just as Bezalel and Oholiab produced quality workmanship for the tabernacle, you are the workmanship of Almighty God. And God has not only prepared specific works for you to do, but he also created you with the specific gifts necessary to do those good works. Make no mistake about it. God’s gifts have a purpose, and God has a purpose for the creative gifts he has given you.

CONCLUSION: In summary, then: 1) God chooses to whom he gives gifts; 2) God gives knowledge, skill, ability and craftsmanship; 3) God gives a wide variety of creative gifts; and 4) God’s gifts have a purpose.

What should our response be to all this?

1) Thank God for the creative gifts he has given you. Do not put down your gifts. Do not envy the gifts of others. Do not boast in your gifts. Rather, thank God for the specific gifts he has given you, and do so with a spirit of humility and wonder.

2) Use and develop your creative gifts. Remember the parable of the talents? God does not want you to bury your gifts in the ground. If you have a sharp mind, develop it! If you have the ability to produce beautiful things with your hands, produce them! Work hard, and develop the gifts God has given you. The Bible says, “To whom much is given, much will be required.” Take the gifts that God has given you, develop them to the best of your ability, and then use them in loving service to God and others.

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3) Engage all of life for God's glory. Remember, "Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." (**1 Timothy 4:4**) So if you are an artist, then yes, go ahead and paint scenes from the Bible, but also paint portraits and landscapes and snippets of life. If you are a musician, then yes, write praise songs to God, but also write love songs and fun songs and songs about all aspects of life. No matter where your gifts or interests lie, God can use you to bring him glory in this world.

By Ray Fowler. © Ray Fowler. Website: <http://www.rayfowler.org>

Break into small groups to discuss the following 5 questions:

What are the creative gifts God has given you?

How have you developed your creative gifts?

How can you develop your creative gifts?

How have you used your creative gifts for God's glory?

How can you use your creative gifts for God's glory?

Creativity in Action: Stones of Remembrance

As a final exercise, you will create "Stones of Remembrance" referenced in the Book of Joshua 4:8-9. Stones of Remembrance were physical reminders of an encounter with God. At this time you will use one of your creative gifts to make a "stone of remembrance", a physical reminder pertaining to this program. Write a poem, make a collage, compose a song, etc.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Scriptural References

*** Ephesians 2:10**

Exodus 31:1-8

Genesis 4:21 *His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe.*

1 Corinthians 12:11 *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.*

Hebrews 2:4 *While God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

Isaiah 45:9 *Woe to him who strives with him who formed him, a pot among earthen pots! Does the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?' or 'Your work has no handles'?*

Exodus 31:2-3 *See, I have called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with ability and intelligence, with knowledge and all craftsmanship.*

Genesis 1:2 *The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

Genesis 2:7 *Then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.*

John 3:8 *The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*

Ezekiel 36:26-27 *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.*

James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

1 Corinthians 4:7 *For who sees anything different in you? 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?*

Romans 12:6 *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith.*

1 Timothy 4:4 *For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving.*

Joshua 4:8-9 *And the people of Israel did just as Joshua commanded and took up twelve stones out of the midst of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the people of Israel, just as the LORD told Joshua. And they carried them over with them to the place where they lodged and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant had stood; and they are there to this day.*

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Appendix

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

C.O.M.A. Bible Study Method Lesson 0

A simple method that is commonly used to begin Bible reading and study is a method called **C.O.M.A.** These 4 simple words give you an outline for how to read the text.

Step 1: Choose the text.

Step 2: Read the text together (possibly more than once).

Now, apply **C.O.M.A.**

CONTEXT

What is the context of this passage? You can find this out by asking a few questions.

Who wrote this scripture?

Who were they writing to?

Why did they write this?

OBSERVATION

What are some of the things you can observe about the writing? You could look for some of these things:

Are there any phrases or words that stand out or are repeated?

What are the main points the text is making?

MEANING

Now it's time to figure out what this text means! It's pointless to read scripture if you don't wrestle with what it actually means. All of scripture is written to reveal to us who God is, so that we may know him and enjoy Him.

What does this passage teach you about God?

What does this passage teach you about yourself?

What does this passage teach you about having a close relationship with God?

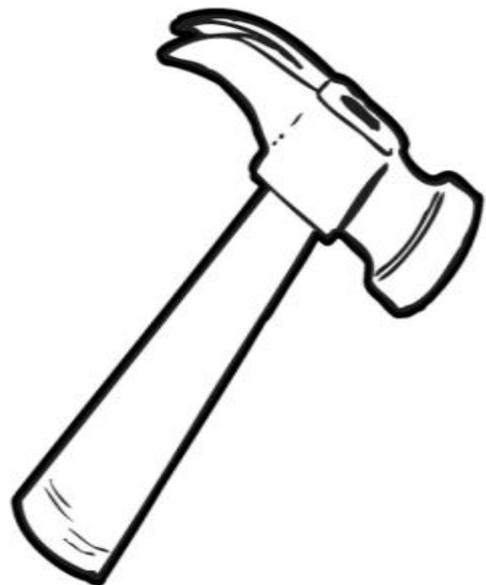
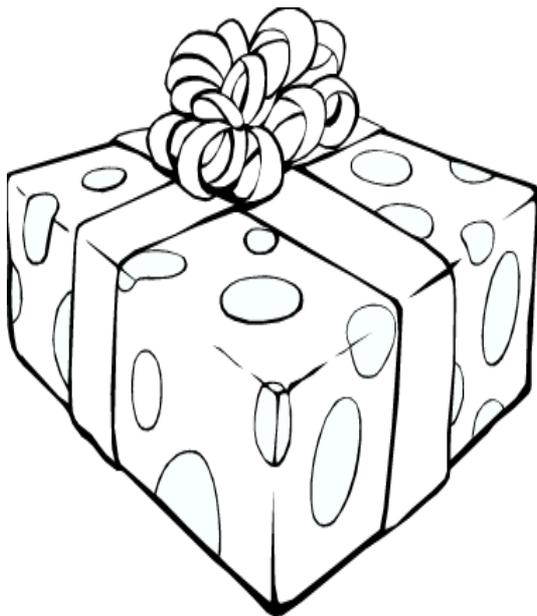
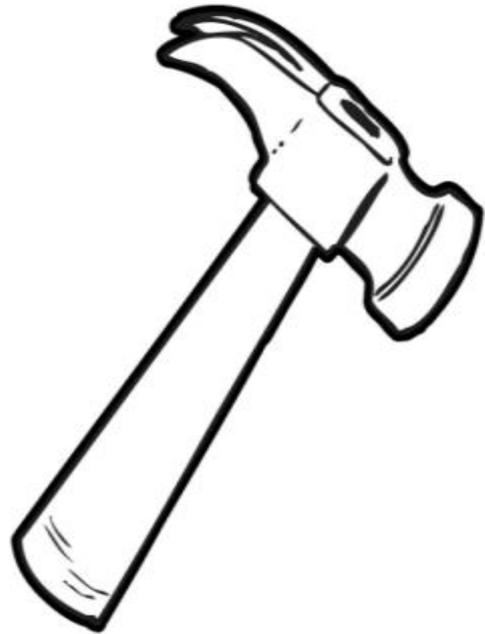
APPLICATION

What is your response to this passage?

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Undeserved Gift vs. Deserved Wages Printout Lesson 0

(Reprint and cut apart these images so each participant has one gift and hammer.)



You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Once Upon a Time Story Lesson 3

(To be used with Valuable Squares Exercise)

1. While at the zoo, you were bitten by a rare species of monkey. You are starting to feel very sick, and your doctor diagnoses you with a very serious illness. Your doctor is unsure of how to cure you, and doesn't know whether the disease is fatal. He tells you that you have to give up one of the things you like to do (**discard 1 activity**).
2. Because of the disease, you are hospitalized for a short time. Your career suffers, and you lose two of the things you wanted from your future or career (**discard 1 dream and 1 future possession**).
3. Because of your time off from work, you are short of cash and have to sell one of your possessions (**discard 1 possession**).
4. You are hospitalized again. Your doctor requires you to give up another activity (**discard 1 activity**) and limit your visits with friends (**give up 1 relationship**).
5. You are exhausted from the illness and trying to work. You lose two more career items (**discard 2 dreams**) and must give up an activity (**discard 1 activity**). Also, another friend disappears from your life because you no longer seem able to maintain relationships (**discard 1 relationship**).
6. You are permanently hospitalized. You are only allowed one visitor and can take only one possession to the hospital with you. (**Discard 1 important person and 1 possession**).
7. Your doctor finds a hospital in Europe that specializes in rare monkey bites. Once there, you will have to live near the hospital for the rest of your life in case you ever suffer from symptoms again. Because you have to be at the hospital immediately, you can only take one person or possession. Which one will it be (**eliminate 1 possession and 1 relationship**)?
8. You are starting your life over again with only this person or possession.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Core Values Exercise Lesson 3

- Step 1 Check off all those qualities or principles you think are most desirable.
Step 2 Go back again and limit this list to 8.
Step 3 Define each one.
Step 4 Rank them in order of importance. (Compare them in pairs and ask which one you would honor first in any given situation.)
Step 5 Place them in the Top Values Chart.

Accomplishment	Education	Independence	Pleasure
Accuracy	Environment	Equality	Power
Adventure	Integrity	Intelligence	Personal Growth
Approval	Excellence	Joy	Perseverance
Beauty	Fairness	Justice	Privacy
Challenge	Faith	Knowledge	Prosperity
Change	Family	Leadership	Punctuality
Cleanliness	Flexibility	Love	Purpose
Commitment	Freedom	Loyalty	Strength
Community	Friendship	Meaning	Success
Compassion	Fulfillment	Modesty	Teamwork
Confidence	Fun	Money	Tolerance
Competition	Generosity	Nature	Tradition
Confidence	Genuineness	Obedience	Trust
Creativity	Gratitude	Open-mindedness	Truth
Decisiveness	Hard work	Optimism	Varity
Determination	Harmony	Orderliness	Vitality
Discipline	Healing	Perfections	Wealth
	Honesty	Perseverance	Wisdom
	Honor		Zeal

*(Add any others not listed).

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

In your Workbook list top 8 and define:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

Now Prioritize:

Top Values Chart

Name:

Date:

Priority or Rank	My Values
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Who I Am in Christ²⁰ Lesson 3

I Am Accepted

John 1:12	I am God's child.
John 15:15	I am Christ's friend.
Romans 5:1	I have been justified.
1 Corinthians 6:17	I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.
1 Corinthians 6:20	I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.
1 Corinthians 12:27	I am a member of Christ's body.
Ephesians 1:1	I am a saint.
Ephesians 1:5	I have been adopted as God's child.
Ephesians 2:18	I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
Colossians 1:14	I have been redeemed and forgiven of all my sins.
Colossians 2:10	I am complete. In Christ I Am Secure.

I Am Secure

Romans 8:1,2	I am free from condemnation.
Romans 8:28	I am assured that all things work together for good.
Romans 8:31-34	I am free from any condemning charges against me.
Romans 8:35-39	I cannot be separated from the love of God.
2 Corinthians 1:21,22	I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God.
Philippians 1:6	I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.
Philippians 3:20	I am a citizen of heaven.
Colossians 3:3	I am hidden with Christ in God.
2 Timothy 1:7	I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.
Hebrews 4:16	I can find grace and mercy in time of need.
1 John 5:18	I am born of God, and the evil one cannot touch me.

I Am Significant

Matthew 5:13,14	I am the salt and life of the earth.
John 15:1,5	I am a branch of the true vine, a channel of His life.
John 15:16	I have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit.
Acts 1:8	I am a personal witness of Christ.
1 Corinthians 3:16	I am God's temple.
2 Corinthians 5:17-21	I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
2 Corinthians 6:1	I am God's coworker (see 1 Cor. 3:9).
Ephesians 2:6	I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realm.
Ephesians 2:10	I am God's workmanship.
Ephesians 3:12	I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
Philippians 4:13	I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

²⁰ Anderson, N.T. "Victory Over Darkness", Bible Seven. bibleseven.com/b7-docs/victoryinchrist_synopsis.doc. Retrieved 11/1/16.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Treasure Hunt - 7 Science-Backed Reasons Lesson 4

Why Generosity Is Good For Your Health by Amanda Chan ²¹

Lesson 4 - **Treasure Hunt**

Write one benefit from the list below on a slip of paper to place in an egg or to hide around the room (or cut this list into strips and hide each strip in the room).

Science shows that **giving keeps stress hormones in check**. Stinginess raises cortisol levels in the blood, and cortisol is linked to a number of illnesses. Giving helps decrease cortisol.

Science shows that **giving increases job satisfaction**. Helping others on the job shows that "being altruistic not only improves well-being at work, but also makes people feel more committed to their work and less likely to quit."

Science shows that **giving leads to more success** because "all benefit from each other's generosity."

Science shows that **giving** by helping others, "whether it be by helping to run errands, watching their children, or giving them a lift somewhere — is linked with a **decreased mortality risk**."

Science shows that **giving keeps cycle of "good" going** because "thinking about times you've helped others will then make you want to help others again."

Science shows that **generosity** is one of the **key factors for a happy marriage**.

Science shows that volunteering **improves wellbeing, life satisfaction**, and is linked with **decreased depression** and a lower risk of dying early.

²¹ Chan, A. "7 Science-Backed Reasons Why Generosity Is Good For Your Health." The Huffington Post (12/1/2013). http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/12/01/generosity-health_n_4323727.html. Retrieved 10/31/16.

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A Guide from Acts 22:3-21 on Sharing Testimony Lesson 5

Paul's Life before Conversion (Acts 22:3-5)

Paul introduced himself briefly and shared about his life before he knew Jesus and trusted in Him.

Purpose: to give specific and appropriate examples of what your life was like before trusting in Christ, such as attitudes, needs, problems, and idols. L
SEP

Try to relate with people, especially the non-Christians, without drawing too much attention to yourself. Make it mainly about your great need for Jesus.

How God saved Paul through Jesus (Acts 22:6-11) L SEP

Paul explained how God had found and saved him. L
SEP

Purpose: to give a clear account of how God has overcome your resistance and L
SEP provided salvation so that it points to His grace and mercy. L
SEP

Include gospel contents, such as the conviction and repentance of sin, faith in the L
SEP grace and accomplished work of Christ, and how it has impacted your life. L
SEP

Be clear, simple, and real. Avoid using too many jargons that only Christians would be able to understand.

Repentance, Baptism, and New Life in Christ (Acts 22:12-21) L SEP

Paul shared about how his new life – a life marked by repentance from sin, baptism (v16), and living for the gospel (v21). L
SEP

Purpose: to testify how the grace of God has transformed your life. L
SEP

Be specific in sharing how God is not just your Savior but also your Lord now. Avoid using vague statements such as saying, "I have so much peace now," without explicitly connecting this peace to the gospel. Instead, make the gospel and its transforming power clear and explicit to your audience.

General Tips

Write out your testimony based on the sections in the guide above. L
SEP Reflect, re-read, and refine.

Try to include one or two appropriate Scriptures in your testimony about God's original design for man (as His companion and image bearer), the cost of sin, the gift of salvation or what it means to have new life in Christ.

Unless the circumstance is very unique, keep your sharing between 3-5 minutes. L
SEP

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

"God's Good Gift of Creativity" by Ray Fowler Lesson 6
By Ray Fowler. © Ray Fowler. Website: <http://www.rayfowler.org>

INTRODUCTION

Our text in Exodus takes place immediately after the giving of the Ten Commandments. Moses has ascended to the top of Mount Sinai where God has just given him detailed instructions concerning the tabernacle. And now in chapter 31 God tells Moses how the building of the tabernacle is to be accomplished.

Exodus 31:1-6: *Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts — to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship. Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you."*

So what is creativity, and where does it come from? When God created the world, he created man and woman in his own image. He told them to be fruitful and multiply and to rule over all that he had created. As part of that rule God had Adam name the animals. This was one of the first recorded creative acts of man. He also placed Adam and Eve in the garden and gave them work to do. That work involved thinking, planning, and decision making, all of which are aspects of the creative process.

After the fall we find that mankind's creativity continued, although it was now stained by sin. In the early chapters of Genesis we see the rise of agriculture, the building of cities, the forging of tools, and even the beginning of music. We read in **Genesis 4:21** that "Jubal ... was the father of all who play the harp and flute." In short, we find the beginnings of human culture as man began to put into practice the creative gifts that God had given him to fulfill his task of ruling over creation.

So God, the creator, is the source of all creativity. And in creating man in his own image, he gave man gifts of creativity also.

Our text has to do with a very practical matter. God is telling Moses who will be in charge of building the tabernacle. But the text also contains four very important principles for us as we consider God's good gift of creativity.

I. God chooses to whom he gives gifts. (1-2)

The first thing we learn from our text this morning is that God chooses to whom he gives gifts. Look at verses 1-2: "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

chosen Bezalel, son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah.” The word translated “chosen” in this verse is a word that means, “called or commissioned.” You have heard of people commissioning artwork to be done before. Here God commissions Bezalel, son of Uri, for the work of overseeing the building of the tabernacle. God had gifted Bezalel for this task. God chooses to whom he gives gifts.

We find this principle throughout Scripture. It is true of spiritual gifts. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul lists a number of the gifts, and then he says, “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.” (**1 Corinthians 12:11**) **Hebrews 2:4** also speaks of “gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.”

But spiritual gifts are only one example of this. God is the giver of all gifts, and he chooses which gifts to give to whom. God did not create everyone the same. To some he gives artistic ability, to others musical ability, to others the ability to make things with their hands. God in his wisdom gave you exactly the creative gifts that he wanted you to have. Your gifts are part of who you are. They are part of the person that God created you to be. And so we should receive those gifts with thanksgiving and use them to the best of our ability.

Some people don’t like the gifts that they have. They would rather trade them in for someone else’s gifts. But that displays a lack of faith in God. We read in Isaiah 45: “Woe to him who quarrels with his Maker, to him who is but a potsherd among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, ‘What are you making?’” (**Isaiah 45:9**) But isn’t that exactly what we are doing when we question the gifts that God has given us? Are we not saying, “God, why did you make me this way? God, why did you give me this set of gifts? Why didn’t you give me those gifts instead?” God chooses to whom he gives gifts, and so we should not disparage our own gifts from God, nor should we envy the gifts of others.

II. God gives knowledge, skill, ability, and craftsmanship. (3)

The second thing we learn from our text this morning is that God gives knowledge, skill, ability, and craftsmanship. Look at Exodus 31 again: “See, I have chosen Bezalel, son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts.” (**Exodus 31:2-3**)

I find it interesting that God says, “I have filled him with the Spirit of God to do all these things.” Throughout Scripture we continually find God’s Spirit involved in creative acts. When God first created the world, we read in **Genesis 1:2** that “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.” When God created man, we

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read in **Genesis 2:7**: "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." That word "breathed" calls to mind God's spirit. What is the breath of God if not the Spirit of God? When you become a Christian, you become a new creation in Christ. How? Jesus said you are born again, which he also called being "born of the Spirit." (**John 3:8**) He was referring back to Ezekiel 36 where God said, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws." (**Ezekiel 36:26-27**) The Holy Spirit is part of all of God's creative acts, and so it should not surprise us that God also gives us our creative gifts through the Holy Spirit.

Apparently this man, Bezalel, was a master craftsman. He was filled with the Spirit of God in knowledge, skill, and ability to do the work of building the tabernacle. God had clearly chosen Bezalel for this task long before he revealed it to Moses. Moses didn't just walk down the mountain and find that Bezalel could suddenly do all these things. God doesn't work that way. God had been preparing Bezalel all along. And Bezalel would have had to work hard to develop those gifts as well. Still, God had chosen him for this task, and with that in mind, he had "filled him with the Spirit of God, with skill, ability, and knowledge in all kinds of crafts."

Now we are not all going to be like a Bezalel. It seems that Bezalel was an extraordinarily gifted man. You and I will probably not attain the same level of skill and mastery that Bezalel obviously had. And that's okay. God not only chooses to whom he gives gifts; he also chooses how much of any gift he gives to each person. But the point is this. Whatever knowledge, skill, and ability you have comes from God. **James 1:17** says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father." (**James 1:17**) Paul asked the Corinthians, "What do you have that you did not receive?" (**1 Corinthians 4:7**) God is the giver of all good gifts, and so we should never take a wrongful pride in the talents and gifts that he has given us.

I taught guitar and piano for many years, and one thing I learned quickly was that there were some people who had a special aptitude for music that others just did not. For some people rhythm and timing came naturally, whereas for others they just never seemed to get it. Some people take to an instrument or an activity in a special way. They have a certain facility for writing or drawing or electronics or computers where it just comes easy for them. We often call them "naturals" but there is nothing natural about it. God gives us those abilities. They are a gift from God.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

Do you have knowledge in a certain area? Do you have special abilities? Do you have skills that you have been able to develop beyond what the average person can do in that area? God gave that to you. It comes from him. God gave you your creative abilities, and you need to honor him with the gifts he has given you. God gives knowledge, skill, ability, and craftsmanship.

III. God gives a wide variety of creative gifts. (4-5)

The third thing we learn from our text this morning is that God gives a wide variety of creative gifts. Going back to Exodus 31, look at verses 4-5. When God gifted Bezalel, he gave him knowledge, skill, and ability “to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver, and bronze, to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.” (**Exodus 31:4-5**)

Bezalel wasn't just given one gift like the ability to work with gold. Bezalel was skilled in many mediums – gold, silver, and bronze. He knew how to cut stones and place them in beautiful settings. He understood carpentry and how to work with wood. Apparently he knew much more, because verse five finally stops listing all his different skills and just says he was able to engage in all kinds of craftsmanship.

God gave Bezalel a wide variety of gifts. And that was all just one person! **Romans 12:6** says, “We [all] have different gifts, according to the grace given us.” God in his grace gives a wide variety of gifts to all people everywhere.

So when we think of creative gifts, we should not limit ourselves to just thinking about the creative arts – painting, sculpture, writing, music, dance, design, photography, and so on. All of human endeavor involves creative gifts and abilities, from a simple setting of the table for dinner to the building of a vast cathedral.

Every person here today is a creative person. It's true. Anytime you put part of yourself into a task or project you are being creative. Anytime you organize or decorate something you are being creative. Anytime you solve a problem you are being creative. Anytime you inject humor into a situation you are being creative. Anytime you apply the knowledge, ability, and skill that God has given you to the task at hand, you are being creative.

So when you think about creativity, don't just think about the arts! God gives a wide variety of creative gifts, and he has given creative gifts to you, too. There is a reason God gave you the specific gifts that make you who you are.

IV. God's gifts have a purpose. (6)

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

That leads us to our fourth and final point this morning. God's gifts have a purpose. Look at verse 6 where God expands the creative task for building the tabernacle beyond just Bezalel: "Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab, son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also, I have given skill to all the craftsmen to make everything I have commanded you." (**Exodus 31:6**)

Why did God give Bezalel and Oholiab and all the other craftsmen their specific skills? I am sure they used those skills for many other things as well, but God also had a specific purpose in mind for them. God had given them all the particular skills they needed in order to build the tabernacle, and not just to build it, but to build it according to God's exact specifications, as God told Moses, "to make everything I have commanded you."

God gives creative gifts for a purpose. Part of that purpose is simply for us to fulfill our role as human beings made in the image of God. Listen to what theologian Abraham Kuyper says about this:

"As image-bearer of God, man possesses the possibility both to create something beautiful and to delight in it. ... The world of sounds, the world of forms, the world of tints, and the world of poetic ideas can have no other source than God; and it is our privilege as bearers of his image, to have a perception of this beautiful world, artistically to reproduce, and humanly to enjoy it." (Abraham Kuyper; Calvinism, pp. 142,156-157)

A strong, biblically-based creational theology encourages us as Christians to get involved in all areas of life. Too often we think of Christianity only in terms of the Bible, prayer, and church on Sunday mornings. But as important as all those things are, the Christian life is so much bigger than that. Christianity is all about being human to the glory of God. That means taking all that God has created in this world and all of human culture and creativity and then returning it to God in praise. As Paul says in 1 Timothy 4, "Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." (**1 Timothy 4:4**) Otherwise, Christian faith becomes divorced from real life, and we lose our real influence as Christians in the world.

The best book I have ever read on this whole theme of Christian interaction with culture and creativity and the arts was written by the Dutch art history professor, H. R. Rookmaaker. The book is called Art Needs No Justification. It is a thin little paperback, only 60 pages long, and for me it was life changing. It opened my eyes to the incredible importance of the doctrine of creation for the church as a whole. Listen to some of his analysis of how Christianity began to lose its influence in society in the eighteenth century.

Rookmaaker writes:

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"The mainstream of Christianity turned to a kind of pietism in which the idea of the covenant, as preached in the books of Moses and throughout the whole of Scripture, was bypassed. The Old Testament was often neglected, and the meaning of the Christian life was narrowed to that of the devotional life alone. Too easily, large areas of human reality, such as philosophy, science, the arts, economics, and politics were handed over to the world, as Christians concentrated mainly on pious activities."

"If the world's system was a secularized one, missing true spirituality, the Christian's attitude also became a reduced one, missing its foundation in reality, being uninterested in the created world. It sometimes became a ghostlike spirituality without a body. Christians have indeed been active. But they have often optimistically believed that it was enough to preach the gospel and to help in a charitable way. In concentrating on saving souls they have forgotten that God is the God of life and that the Bible teaches people how to live, how to deal with our world, God's creation. The result is that even though many people became Christians, nevertheless our world became totally secularized with almost no Christian influence." (Rookmaaker; Art Needs No Justification, pp. 17-18)

The church lost its *influence* in the world because it lost *interest* in the world that God created. How sad! As Christians, we should not only be interested in Christianity, but we should be interested in everything! C.S. Lewis once wrote:

"I believe that any Christian who is qualified to write a good popular book on any science may do much more good by that than by any directly apologetic work. ... What we want is not more little books about Christianity, but more little books by Christians on other subjects." (Lewis; God in the Dock, 'Christian Apologetics')

I thought about that when I started up my blog. The tagline for my blog reads: "Thoughts on God and life from a Christian perspective." That was very intentional. I could have limited my blog specifically to Christian topics and themes only, but I knew that would also have limited my audience. So I chose to write about anything that interested me – books, music, movies, science, technology, politics, parenting, family life, and so on. Do you know what has happened? All sorts of people visit the blog. Somebody searching for information on a recent movie like "3:10 to Yuma" arrives at the blog, reads the post, then looks around and discovers other articles of interest. I don't specifically mention God or Christ in every post because I don't have to. All of life belongs to God. Anyone who reads the blog will soon discover that I am a Christian because that is just part of who I am, and it comes out naturally in the blog as a whole. Isn't that the way it should work in all areas of our lives?

Listen to H. R. Rookmaaker once again:

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

"Very often we have created barriers against hearing the gospel because we preached that we care for people and that this world is God's but we did not act on those principles. Our lack of care showed that we were not really interested in people or in God's creation. ..."

"We should remind ourselves that Christ did not come to make us Christians or to save our souls only but that he came to redeem us that we might be human in the full sense of that word. To be new people means that we can begin to act in our full, free, human capacity in all facets of our lives. Therefore, to be a Christian means that one has humanity, the freedom to work in God's creation and to use the talents God has given to each of us, to his glory and to the benefit of our neighbors. Therefore, if we have artistic talents, they should be used." (Rookmaaker; *Art Needs No Justification*, pp. 19-20)

Beyond the general overall purpose of reflecting the image of God in society by exercising your creative gifts, God also has some specific purposes for the gifts he has given you. Going back to the tabernacle in Exodus 31, God had a very specific purpose for the creative gifts he gave to Bezalel and Oholiab. How about for New Testament believers today?

Ephesians 2:10 says that "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (**Ephesians 2:10**) Isn't that awesome? Just as Bezalel and Oholiab produced quality workmanship for the tabernacle, you are the workmanship of Almighty God. God has not only prepared specific works for you to do, but he also created you with the specific gifts necessary to do those good works. Make no mistake about it. God's gifts have a purpose, and God has a purpose for the creative gifts he has given you.

CONCLUSION: In summary: 1) God chooses to whom he gives gifts; 2) God gives knowledge, skill, ability, and craftsmanship; 3) God gives a wide variety of creative gifts; and 4) God's gifts have a purpose.

What should our response be to all this?

1) Thank God for the creative gifts he has given you. Do not put down your gifts. Do not envy the gifts of others. Do not boast in your gifts. Rather, thank God for the specific gifts he has given you, and do so with a spirit of humility and wonder.

2) Use and develop your creative gifts. Remember the parable of the talents? God does not want you to bury your gifts in the ground. If you have a sharp mind, develop it! If you have the ability to produce beautiful things with your hands, produce them! Work hard, and develop the gifts God has given you.

You are important, not because of what you have but because of who(se) you are.

The Bible says, "To whom much is given, much will be required." Take the gifts that God has given you, develop them to the best of your ability, and then use them in loving service to God and others.

3) Engage all of life for God's glory. Remember, "Everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." (**1 Timothy 4:4**) So if you are an artist, then yes, go ahead and paint scenes from the Bible, but also paint portraits and landscapes and snippets of life. If you are a musician, then yes, write praise songs to God, but also write love songs and fun songs and songs about all aspects of life. No matter where your gifts or interests lie, God can use you to bring him glory in this world.

By Ray Fowler. © Ray Fowler. Website: <http://www.rayfowler.org>

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Additional Biblical Resource

"A Biblical View of Human Worth"

The purpose of this document is to communicate the Christian view of the worth of all people. This document has three major sections. Section 1 discusses the worth of all people, including those who are not Christians and have had no opportunity to hear the gospel. Section 2 asks how one can find a common basis to uphold the value of human life with those who do not hold a Christian worldview. This section is particularly written for Christians who work together with non-religious organizations. Section 3 shares the Biblical teaching on the worth of the Christian. The following are the major headings of this document:

Section 1: A Christian view of the worth of all people

Section 2: Advocating the worth of all people with those who do not accept a Christian world view

Section 3: The worth of the Christian

Part A: Where does their worth come from?

Part B: Moving God's truth from the mind to the spirit

Part C: But isn't the self sinful, wicked, and worthless?

Section 1: A Christian view of the worth of all people

The Bible teaches the great value of all people, regardless of their relationship to God or their awareness of the gospel. God deems all people to be of great worth primarily because He has created them in His image.

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God repeatedly states how deeply He loves all people, regardless of their awareness of Him.

Jonah 4:11 But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?

Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

God expresses love for those who are in the midst of rebellion against him.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is...patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

Luke 23:34 Jesus said of those who were crucifying him, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."

All peoples of the world are so valuable to God the Father that he would allow His Son Jesus to die on their behalf.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

While God will execute judgment on all who do not know Christ, this judgment is not something that brings him joy.

Ezekiel 33:11 As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is...patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

God values all people regardless of their gender, age, wealth, race, talent, and exposure to His church and His Word. God loves children.

Matthew 18:10 See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.

Matthew 19:14 Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

God loves women as well as men.

John 11:5 Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

God equally loves people of all races.

Acts 10:34-35 God does not show favoritism, but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.

Revelation 5:9 You were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

God loves the poor as well as the rich.

Luke 6:20 Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

Luke 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.

What has been shared so far indicates the great worth God places on the life of each person. However, a holistic view of mankind requires that one also understands how deeply sin has touched each person. One must understand the judgment of God that resides upon all people because of sin.

Romans 3:19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him.

Romans 1:18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men.

This in no way keeps the Christian from acting in loving ways toward all men, even those who do not know God. God Himself acts in loving ways toward non-Christians and commands that Christians do the same.

Matthew 5:44-45 Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

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

Section 2: Advocating the worth of all people with those who do not accept a Christian world view

Many Christians work in corporate, academic, and non-profit entities that do not hold to a Christian worldview. People at these organizations or in government may not have a belief in God, the Bible, or even the immortal souls of men. The Christian passionately says to everyone, "You are loved and valuable," based on a biblical worldview. How can a Christian advocate the worth of all people to those who do not accept Christian teaching as an authority?

There are ways a Christian can advocate the worth of all people and they have more to do with experience and emotion than with propositional logic. Everyone has an

innate sense that all people have significance. That innate sense is not equally strong in everyone. People are all conditioned by their cultures, families of origin, experiences, and sin. As a result, some people struggle to find worth with certain ethnic groups, children, women, the physically disabled, the poor, perceived enemies and so on. Yet there is a sense that, even for an ethnic group that is perceived as an enemy, their own families and countrymen will find value in them.

Christians can appeal to this innate sense of value by sharing their own love for those perceived to be of little worth. Pictures and videos are tools that can evoke positive emotional responses. Sometimes those who have little in the way of emotional attachment to people have developed a strong bond with a pet. They understand their animal has accomplished nothing in the way of education, work, or personal attainment; yet, they have developed a strong emotional bond with their pet. Love for God's creation at any level can become a springboard that leads to love for people.

Sometimes the goal of a Christian organization is to receive permission or funding to do a particular charitable work. Some parties involved may not see the value of human life, but there may be political or economic advantages for them to allow the charitable work to happen. Many governments and businesses realize that caring for the needy gives them a good public image. While this is not all that the Christian hopes for, such passive acknowledgment of human significance may be enough to allow them to accomplish their intended ministries.

One powerful way to proclaim the value of human life is charitable works by Christians. When Christian people voluntarily serve complete strangers that have nothing to offer them, they send a powerful message to non-Christians who are watching. Their generosity does not fit inside the mindset of anyone whose life values are materialism or power. That's why Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." The selfless love of Christians for undesirable people raises a huge question mark in the hearts of onlookers. They will naturally wonder the reason for the generosity, which then leaves the door open for the believer to share about the unconditional love of God.

Section 3: The worth of the Christian

The Bible speaks of the worth of all people, which was addressed in Section 1. Because of the Fall and the entrance of sin into the world, mankind has fallen under the judgment of God. The image of God is still a part of all people, but it has been marred by sin. All people have great worth in the eyes of God, but all people also are under the judgment of God because of sin.

This is not true for the Christian who has been forgiven and made new in Christ. The Bible has far more to say about the worth of the Christian than it has to say about the worth of mankind in general. There is abundant reason, based on biblical

truth, for every Christian to understand their worth before God and to have a healthy self-concept.

Because this section is longer, it is divided into three parts. **Part A** asks where one's sense of worth ought to come from. **Part B** discusses how one can transform these truths into personal experience. **Part C** asks, "Isn't the self evil and sinful? Shouldn't one put the self to death instead of discussing its worth?"

Part A: Where does one's worth come from?

Everyone searches for worth and meaning in life based on something. What they choose to value will determine whether they are able to attain a sense of worth. If they believe that human worth is determined by beauty, intelligence, wealth or status, they will believe they have worth to the extent they have those things. To the extent they do not have those things, they will feel worthless and insignificant.

The battleground for significance is in the *mind*. What one *believes* determines what they *value*, and what they *value* determines what they *feel* about themselves and others. The Bible stresses that a person's beliefs determine their values:

John 8:32 Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Romans 12:2-3 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

To truly understand one's worth, a person must value the things God values. They must see themselves through his eyes.

Jeremiah 9:23-24 This is what the LORD says, "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD.

1 Samuel 16:7 The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

2 Corinthians 10:12 We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.

Having an understanding of one's significance in Christ does not result in pride. Rather, one learns that fellow Christians are as loved and valued by God as they are. God's goal is not that one becomes lifted up in pride or that one despises themselves. His goal is that one loves themselves the same as they love others.

Matthew 23:39 Love your neighbor as yourself.

Ephesians 5:28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

The Christian should not believe that they are more important than others or that others are more important than them. Jesus commands everyone to love others *as* they love themselves. Understanding one's significance in Christ helps one to understand the value of others' lives as well as their own.

Part B: Moving God's truth from the mind to the spirit

One does not need to be a Christian very long to know that God loves them. The Bible repeatedly confirms God's vast love for Christians. No Christian would dispute this love. Yet many Christians do not have a sense of feeling loved by God. Some Christians have hearts filled with guilt and shame because of their sins and failures. Others see God the Father as a great philanthropist who generously gives eternal life but may not particularly *like* them. One may be ready to acknowledge the love of God in their minds but may not have come to the point where it creates a sense of feeling loved in their hearts.

God *wants* the Christian to be deeply aware of his passionate emotional love for them. In Ephesians 3:16-19, Paul prayed:

I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Paul is writing to a group of people who are already believers. Paul wants the Ephesians—and all the saints—to grasp the love of Christ in a manner that surpasses head knowledge. God wants all Christians everywhere to experience God's love in their hearts. The Apostle John expresses the same thing:

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

When many Christians think of entering into God's presence, they do not imagine joyfully coming before a loving Father. They have hearts full of fear, shame and inadequacy. Why? John says these Christians have not been made perfect in love. It has already been clarified that these Christians are completely forgiven, adopted into the family of God, and passionately loved by the Father. Yet their hearts are dominated by fear, not by joy and peace.

Why are many Christians full of fear and shame? Because they are more emotionally in touch with their own flaws than they are the truth of whom they are in Christ. God wants Christians to experience His love in a way that surpasses their experiences of pain and loss.

God tells Christians His intensely passionate love for them is not something they will experience once they improve themselves, but something they will experience just as they are today. God was speaking about the Prodigal Son, not the compliant brother, when He said in Luke 15:20 and 15:10:

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.... there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

This is how God and His angels feel about someone who has made a complete mess of his life. God's passionate love is not earned by the diligent work of the obedient Christian; it is the birthright of every child of God.

So how can one take the truths that are in their mind and move them 18 inches south into their heart? Jesus said in John 15:9, "Abide in My love." If one's Christian experience is only composed of hard work, they will only experience God's love on a rational level. Warmth and compassion in marriage is maintained by regular, consistent expression of affection for one another. Maintaining the warmth of that relationship requires time and affection from both persons. God extends his passionate love to Christians every day. Christians must make it a priority to abide in Christ's love. This means inviting the love of God to fill those areas of life where the deepest hurt and loss are felt. Experiencing God's love in one's heart is not a one-time event. Like a healthy marriage, it is something that is able to grow in stages over time.

Part C: But isn't the self sinful, wicked and worthless?

Some object to an emphasis on the worth of the Christian because of what the Bible teaches about the sinfulness of human nature. There are passages that can be mistaken to say that human beings are worthless because of their rebellion against God. Some have concluded that it is the duty of the Christian to eradicate the self, not to find the value of the self. The following are some passages that speak clearly about the wickedness of the human heart:

Romans 7:18 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.

Romans 7:23-25 I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

Mark 10:18 “Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.”

Mark 8:35 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.

Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.

Colossians 3:5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature.

Some Christians misunderstand passages like these to say that their self is by nature valueless and needs to be eradicated. They believe that somehow God and themselves (or possibly just God alone) work together to destroy “me” so that a new, Christ-centered being can come into existence.

It feels awkward to embrace the worth of the believer while at the same time comprehending the wickedness of human nature as taught by the verses above. It feels as if both cannot be true.

It is helpful to understand four chronological stages of human nature. First is the **innocent** self, the way God created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Second is the **fallen** self. This refers to the condition of mankind after the Fall and continues to describe all non-Christians today. Third is the **redeemed** self. This refers to all born-again Christians in this life. Christians have a reborn, transformed nature yet still struggle with that fallen side of themselves that still lives within. Fourth is the **glorified** self, the Christian in heaven who is perfected and no longer has any inclination toward sin. The following will look at each of these one by one:

1. The *innocent self*: This refers to the way Adam and Eve were in the Garden of Eden before sin entered the world.

Genesis 1:26-27 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Despite the Fall, the image of God remains in all people. This leads Christians to affirm the value of all human life, as was discussed in Section One.

2. The *fallen self*: The sin of Adam and Eve brought corruption and death to all of their descendants. Mankind stands separated from God because of sin and its effects.

Ephesians 4:17-18 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Romans 3:9-10 What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one."

Because of the Fall, all people have hearts that are inclined away from God. They are not able to please God. This fallen self is at war with God, and this self must be put to death to enter into a right relationship with God.

Romans 8:7-9 The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.

3. The *redeemed self*: When a person comes to faith in Christ, he is reborn—born again. God gives birth to a new nature that did not exist prior to salvation. The qualities of a believer, listed below, are true of every redeemed person whether they have been believers for days or years, whether they are living in or out of fellowship with God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Galatians 5:24 Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires.

Romans 6:2-4 We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

The redeemed self is no longer controlled by sin, Satan and death. However, in this life the redeemed Christian still has the evil desires of the fallen self within. There is a lifelong battle against the sinful desires of the evil nature and the godly desires of the redeemed nature. This results in Christians being torn between two passions and two allegiances. It feels like an internal civil war.

Galatians 5:17 For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

Romans 7:18-19 I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.

When one affirms the worth of the Christian, they are referring to the *redeemed* self. It is very correct to say that the *fallen* self is in rebellion against God and must be put to death. As a result, one must hold to two complementary views of the nature of the Christian. On the one hand, every Christian has a *redeemed* nature that is of great value. At the same time, every Christian also has a *fallen* nature that is in opposition to God and must be resisted, as was just seen.

Many hold to an imbalanced view of the believer that emphasizes one part of his nature over the other. Those who de-emphasize the *fallen* nature can hold to a view of Christianity that does not compel the Christian to righteous living. Those who de-emphasize the *redeemed* nature can have a self-loathing faith that sees Christian growth as a constant process of hating and eradicating one's self. A healthy, holistic view of the Christian is acutely aware of both sides of his nature.

Part 4: The glorified self: This will be the state of every Christian in heaven. Upon death, the fallen nature will be finally eradicated by God. Not only will one not sin any more, but they will not be capable of being tempted.

1 John 3:2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

1 John 2:16-17 For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from

the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

Hebrews 12:23 You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect.