

Westland Free Methodist Church
Mastering Your Life Series: Possessions
January 27, 2008

Possessions. When do we own too much? William Hearst was a very wealthy newspaper publisher who had an incredible collection of art. The heart mansion in northern California is a testament to his insatiable desire for artistic treasures. On one occasion he learned of some artwork he was determined to obtain. He sent his agent abroad to search for the treasure. After months of investigating, the agent reported that the treasure had been found. To further sweeten the find, Hearst learned that the relic wouldn't cost him a dime. He already owned it. The rediscovered piece was in Hearst's warehouse with many other treasures that had likewise never been uncrated.

Having possessions are really an incredible gift from God to accomplish his mission upon earth. Ever looked at it that way. In the garden, everyone would have gone to heaven if we had not eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but because we did, God had to institute a new plan. One that would save the world from its own realm of sin. So planet earth became a place of rescue. Remember Apollo 6, when our astronauts were on such a perfect mission to land on the moon for the first time. Into orbit they went. And big problems happened on that ship. What was a perfect trip, turned into a rescue. The new goal was to get the astronauts back to earth some way. It took a small miracle but it happened. God did the same thing. Eden would have been perfect forever, but we messed it up. We sinned. So the rest of this life is about a rescue effort. And it's in this rescue effort that we are given these possessions to help get us back the place where we really belong, heaven. So let's talk this morning about the kind of rescue effort God has in mind. I want to give you some **principles** from God's word for possessions.

1. Be disciplined in your possessions.

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made." I Corinthians 16:2

Here we have the early church collecting funds for the apostles that when they come, there will be a large stash of funds available for the ongoing work. If the apostles came, they also went, with the cash, so to speak. That's a lot of world missions money going out. It also represents a lot of discipline to set aside cash for another purpose in the future.

Have any trouble putting cash away for noble purposes? If someone comes to you about cash you have stored up for purposes, tell them about this scripture. We are in such a buy it now, pay for it later with interest people that we never get to the point of spending ahead. This is honoring to God when we prepare for the future. Leave the building of bigger barns parable to those who save for nothing purposeful. If what you are saving for has a noble purpose, then that is a good thing. And God will honor it.

Illus. Randy getting tickets in the mail from a contest he entered but never opening the mail, thinking all was lost for the monster truck Jam. Amy could have gone but didn't not knowing the tickets(4) were there. Opened the envelop after we got home, after the event. That's a silly story, but the truth is when we discipline ourselves in every way possible, things work out. But we've got to be disciplined to follow through, and continue to make as many good decisions as possible.

2. Give your possessions with freedom.

"Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." II Corinthians 9:7

Give from the heart when you give. God has created you with the ability and pleasure of giving from the heart, enjoying the thought of others being blessed because of you. This goes straight to the heart of what you value. Selfishness is a value that keeps you from sharing your life, whether possessions or any other part of your life. The inability to be a giver of your life to others brings with it a refusal of community in

general. This is the greatest one threat to society today. Apart from God we become selfish and isolated. In choosing God to be a part of your regular life, you are choosing community. This leads to being a giver and that's right to the core of who you were meant to be.

Look at this way. The closer you move to God, the more of a giving person you will be. The further you move from God, the more Satan has influence over your life, an isolated, fearful, oppressive, selfish, lonely type of living.

Illus. Running With the Horses. We were born to give like the birds of the air were born to fly. But only until the birds are pushed out of the nest will they fly. Who has pushed you out of the possessions nest to finally give, give, give, as you were born to do?

3. Give, manage, and receive without knowledge of it all.

Managing your finances and possessions is imperative. Giving in ways that you know is pleasing to God and what you should do is imperative. Even receiving things from others with gratefulness, whether you have worked for it or not is important to give it your attention and care.

But once you have cared for and managed, you can become ignorant of it's presence and power. Here's **why?**

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing." Matt. 6:3
The message is clear---become ignorant of it all.

And so here's the **how**. This is what it means to be ignorant of your possessional actions. Make good decisions, of all kinds and types, but then let the attachment to you go. This is what it means when you are a proprietor, not an owner. God is the owner of it all. We are simply the managers in his vineyard. This is most obvious when we leave possessions and money to loved ones or a worthy organization after we die. We no longer have any ties to whatsoever. If after you die, you walk into a court of law and say, that is mine, the judge will say who are you? What if in our daily management of our finances and possessions, we were too unattached to them that people, in regards to our possessions, would say, who are you? You see, those are the kind of people God wants to use as conduits for large sums of money and possessions.

If you don't learn this Godly possessions lesson, it might turn out like this.

Drama – "Repossessed"

4. Do not overspend. Borrow with wisdom.

"If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs." Duet. 15:7-8

If it is ok to lend, then it stands to reason it is ok to borrow. But we need to be careful how much we borrow or what we borrow for. I don't have time to show the many other scriptures that reveal the lending of money to those around you. Again, and again, there is evidence that we can borrow, but be careful to not overspend.

One very good principle early in your adult life is to not let your debt suppercede your assets. If you need to take out a car loan, is the car valuable to be sold if need be and pay off the debt. Borrowing above and beyond your home's worth is usually dangerous because of the unsurity of life's circumstances. You get the idea.

5. Handle your possessions within your means, faithfully.

“For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.” II Corinthians 8:12

“Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you” Duet. 16:17

We must focus on managing what we have, not what we do not have. Our attitude about what we have, managing it as if it is a lot, has everything to do with the faithfulness it will take to be faithful with much.

You might know the verse from Matthew 25:21 – *“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things.”*

Don't place undo expectations on yourself. Don't place undo expectations on others either.

6. There is more blessing in giving than in receiving.

“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Acts 20:35

Which gets more press in your thinking? Giving or receiving. Why does Jesus say such a thing? Giving is so much more enjoyable than receiving.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this and see if I do not trow open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing tht you will not have enough room for it.” Mal 3:10

“Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap.” Luke 6:38

7. Store up for yourself the right kind of possessions.

“Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted” Luke 12:33b

Bill Hybels described one man this way: “All he ever really wanted in life was more. He wanted more money, so he partly inherited wealth into a billion-dollar pile of assets. He wanted more fame, so he broke into the Hollywood scene and soon became a filmmaker and star. He wanted more sensual pleasures, so he paid handsome sums to indulge his every sexual urge. He wanted more thrills, so he designed, built, and piloted the fastest aircraft in the world. He wanted more power, so he secretly dealt political favors so skillfully that two U.S. presidents became his pawns. All he ever wanted was more. He was absolutely convinced that more would bring him true satisfaction. Unfortunately, history shows otherwise. He concluded his life emaciated; colorless; sunken chest; fingernails in grotesque, inches-long corkscrews; rotting, black teeth; tumors; innumerable needle marks from his drug addiction. Howard Hughes died believing the myth of more. He died a billionaire junkie, insane by all reasonable standards.”

“I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.” [Martin Luher](#)

What would you like to possess that could last forever. Since things went terribly wrong in the garden of Eden, The only valuable left in this world is Jesus Christ, the savior that died for your sins and mine, that we might receive this free gift, rather than spend the rest of eternity in the rusty, eternal decaying place called hell. Instead, heaven waits for those who will use all their possessions to help every living person choose the same valuable, the only valuable left to save.

