

# STRENGTH

## Time Talent Treasure Terra

**If God** were to ask you today about how generously you had been a steward of His resources so far in your life, what would you say?

We need to think about money and generosity in light of God's Kingdom. We need to look at the environment and our part in caring for it in light of God's view of creation. We need to evaluate our spiritual gifts in light of the body of Christ. We need to think about time in light of both urgency and eternity.

In STRENGTH, we will seek to answer the following questions:

- **WHAT IS 'TIME' AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO GOD'S PROVISION?**
- **HOW DO WE UNDERSTAND SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND THEIR OPERATION IN COMMUNITY AND MISSION?**
- **WHAT'S THE WAY TO BEST HANDLE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES WE'VE BEEN GIVEN?**
- **WHY SHOULD WE CARE ABOUT THE EARTH? HOW CAN WE LIVE RESPONSIBLY?**

Almost everything we read, hear and watch is derived from a materialistic, individualistic, capitalistic approach to time, talent, treasure and terra.



Loving God with all our strength is about our generosity and treatment of someone else's stuff. It's about the account we will be called to in these areas. It's about the kind of people we are and the principles by which we distribute the resources entrusted to our care by God. We want our lives to count. We want to come to the end and have God say to us, "Well done!"

## LIFE

*is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in sideways, thoroughly used up, totally worn out and loudly proclaiming, "Wow - what a ride!"*

Peter Sage

# STRENGTH

## The Four 'T's

Time, Talent, Treasure, Terra

God as Creator not only created the universe initially from nothing, but, as Sustainer, is continually willing the universe to be in existence.

Science knows it but can't explain it: *The nucleus of an atom consists of protons and neutrons (two types of baryons) bound by the nuclear force. These baryons are further composed of sub-atomic fundamental particles known as quarks bound by the strong interaction. (Wikipedia)*

- Each moment of time is precious - a gift from God.
- Every dollar God provides is a valuable resource.
- Each opportunity for ministry is precious and God equips us to take advantage of it.
- All creation is valuable to God as He is keeping it in existence - we align ourselves with His creative and sustaining impulses when we care for it.

The fact that it all holds together can be attributed to the fact that God *wants* it to stay together. Loving God with all our strength is our response to His generosity.

## THE WAR ON STEWARDSHIP OF STRENGTH

### 4 CULTURAL FACTORS

#### 1. MATERIALISM (VS. BEING KINGDOM-MINDED)

Greed, envy, pride, pursuits, no ambition

#### 2. INDIVIDUALISM (VS. BEING COMMUNITY-MINDED)

More interested in  
 personal gain than generosity  
 personal use of time than giving of your time to others  
 personal comfort than care for the earth  
 personal entertainment than building the body

#### 3. SECULAR HUMANISM (VS. WE ARE GOD'S CREATION)

No reason for being vs. having purpose in Christ

#### 4. NOMINALISM IN THE CHURCH (VS. A RADICAL APPROACH)

Middle American evangelicalism vs. biblical approach - Making more money, upward status, power with position, are all applauded by a society that sees these things as not just enviable goals and legitimate pursuits, but ultimate goals and pursuits.



# STRENGTH - TIME

## Time

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "time" as:

*"the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future, regarded as a whole."*

Another standard dictionary definition is:

*"a nonspatial linear continuum wherein events occur in an apparently irreversible order."*

## TYPES OF RHYTHM

### PNIC!

Life is lived as a reaction to a series of chaotic uncontrollable events - I'm a victim.

### PRESSURE

Life is lived by the tyranny of the urgent - I'm a pawn.

### PRIORITY

Life is lived trying to balance activities by priority - I'm a manager.

### PRINCIPLE

Life is lived in a rhythm based on biblical principles - I'm a steward.

## WAYS TO VIEW 'TIME'

1. COMPASS - εον (eon)
2. CALENDAR - καιρος (kairos)
3. CLOCK - χρονος (chronos)

### 1. COMPASS

The direction of a life over a lifespan.- the legacy that we leave behind. Our legacy is determined by our commitment to living in the right direction.



2 Tim. 4:6-8 - I have fought the good fight.

### 2. CALENDAR

The rhythm of our lives or the way that our values are lived out each day, each week, and each month - flow, movement, stream, tempo.

Mark 6 - A Day In The Life of Christ.



### 3. CLOCK

Understanding the sacred value of the moment-by-moment efficient use of time.

Eph. 5:15-17 - Be very careful how you live.



# STRENGTH - TALENT

## Talent

Loving God with all you've been given is about discovering not only your place in the body or your special contribution to the church, but discovering the joy of ministering beside others who are using their gifts in areas of their passion and in roles that reflect their experience and personal style; a reflection of the diversity of gifts and the unity of the Spirit.

## TALENT

PASSION

STYLE

EXPERIENCE

SPIRITUAL GIFTS



## UNDERLYING ASSUMPTIONS

- Believers desire to be part of a vibrant, well-functioning church.
- Believers are integral parts of the church through active Mission Group involvement and participation.
- The Mission Group is the venue where a person's gift, passion and style often first become public and exercised.
- Every believer is a '10' in ministry somewhere.
- God has designed, gifted and impassioned us to together carry out His mission.
- Developing people builds the overall ministry of the local church.
- The church has all the resources needed to do God's will in this place at this time.

## REASONS TO SERVE

### TO GLORIFY GOD

1 Peter 4:11

*If you have the gift of speaking, preach God's message. If you have the gift of helping others, do it with the strength that God supplies. Everything should be done in a way that will bring honour to God because of Jesus Christ, who is glorious and powerful forever*

### TO BUILD UP OTHERS

Eph 4:11-12

*<sup>11</sup>Christ chose some of us to be apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, and teachers, <sup>12</sup>so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong.*

# STRENGTH - TREASURE

## Treasure

### Reasons to Tithe:

**1. To express our love for God**

While we were sinners, Christ died for us. God gave of His firstfruits for us.

**2. To express our thanks.**

We were once slaves and Christ set us free.

**3. It's a place to start that gets us in the game.**

It's proportional. We can tithe no matter what we make.

**4. It's all His and He asks for part of it back.**

**5. It opens the door for blessing.**

God loves us far too much to make a vending machine out of our relationship – we must not tithe for rewards. If we are not generous with God, we close the door to the possibility that God may bless us. He also reserves the right to test our motives. He wants our love to grow for Him and it doesn't come from rewards.

## *Tithes*

A 'tithe' is a tenth. The tithe principle is this: God is gracious and gives to us and we simply give back to God what's His.

The biblical description of tithing includes three words:

**Firstfruits, Storehouse Tithe**

Gen 4 - Abel's first fruits

Exodus 23:19 - the best of the firstfruits go to the house of God

Deut 26:22 - Firstfruits of the ground to the temple

Mal 3 - the local spiritual assembly is the storehouse (corresponding today to the local church)

Tithing shows you are jealous for God's work, want it to prosper, that there would be no hindrances to God's work. Not to make the church rich financially but rich in ministry.

In the New Testament, discipleship with Jesus calls for more than 10% (how about "all"?). We do not want to limit the call of God on peoples' lives to give above and beyond 10%. At Southside, tithing is a great place to start. The principle of tithing carries through the New Testament and we are under grace so that we can be obedient.



## LIVING IT OUT IN COMMUNITY: GENEROUS LIVES

How do we keep each other accountable to a lifestyle that runs against everything our culture demands of us? On a personal level, discipling partners are helpful in this area. We will also speak about how it's going in Mission Group and from time to time more generally in the congregation.

Why is it Southside doesn't 'pass the plate'? In order to make tithing a **decision** not an **impulse**. When you pass a basket you grab some cash from the wallet and that makes you feel good. If Jesus has sacrificed Himself and redeemed me and the Holy Spirit has gripped me with His amazing grace – my life change will determine my decision to tithe and I will not be satisfied flipping a fiver into the plate as it goes by: "I've paid my dues – where's my stuff?"

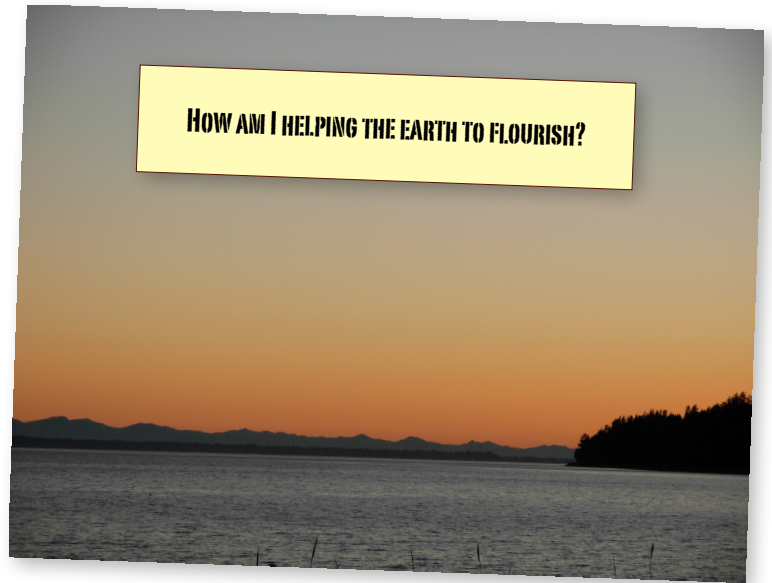
At Southside, we encourage people to tithe consistently as it encourages us to be obedient in good times and bad (not to mention helping in terms of the church budget and cash flow. One helpful way of being consistent is to give post-dated cheques for a set period of time).

The church budget is affirmed every fall by the church and is not seen as a political entity but as a tool for the mission of Christ. It allows us to move ahead each year with appropriate guidance and accountability, effectively releasing resources for the mission of Christ through the local church.

# STRENGTH - TERRA

## Terra

Much has been said about the environment and the human responsibility to care for it. The biblical view is that God made it, He's renewing it and it's a human responsibility to help it to flourish through good stewardship. As followers of Jesus, we align ourselves with God's will for His creation when we care for it.



HOW AM I HELPING THE EARTH TO FLOURISH?

**GENESIS 1 – GOD'S GOODNESS IS REVEALED** - God is creating what He will inhabit – heavens, earth, and us. Everything is living in response to God's creative will.

**GENESIS 2 – A PLACE FOR PEOPLE** - We are not just to *preserve* the earth - we are to help cause it to *flourish*.

**GENESIS 3 – THE REALITY OF REBELLION** - Humans disobeyed God. The result is a broken relationship with God (spiritual and physical death), with each other (nakedness, shame), and with the land (curse). Humans destroy earth in greed and domination rather than loving dominion.

**THE MOSAIC LAW/COVENANT** - The Lord holds title to the land. The right to enjoy land and its fruits flows directly from relationship with God. God promised land to His people in the OT. In the NT God promises the whole earth to new people - God's kingdom is for everyone.

**PSALM 19** - All of creation declares God's glory. Scripture declares God's glory. We declare God's glory.

**HOSEA 4** - When there is no acknowledgment of God in the land there is no shalom (peace).

**ROMANS 8:19** - The creation waits in eager expectation for the sons of God to be revealed.

**ROMANS 8:20** - The creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice,

**ROMANS 8:21** - The creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into freedom.

**COL. 1:15-20** - All things are created, sustained and redeemed by Christ. Christ is reconciling and making new the relationships between humans and God, each other, and the land. He's reversing the affects of sin.

**2 PETER 3:10, REV 21:1-5** - There is a final day of reckoning when Christ will complete the reconciliation of all things and refine or purge the bad to reveal the new. God doesn't make all new things, He makes all things new.

**MATT 24:40** - Heaven on earth: Christians are left behind to inherit a renewed earth.