

Discussing
Stewardship
with Confirmands



Discussion Guide



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September's Focus: You Are God's Steward

1. God owns the world and all things.
2. Ephesians 2:10: We are God's workmanship created to do the good works God has prepared for us to do.
John 15:8: We are to bear fruit.
Galatians 6:10: We are to do good to all people, especially believers.
1 Peter 4:10: We are to use the gifts God gives us in service to others.
3. Faithful, obedient, submissive, servant's heart, loving, compassionate, and generous

Message 1 (Page 6)

1. God gave Martin Luther a strong and committed faith. He was intelligent and tireless. He was an avid reader and writer. He persevered during some challenging times. He was completely dependent upon God.
2. Romans 10:17: Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of God.
3. Acts 4:20: God grace and faith compel us to want to share Christ with others.
4. Acts 1:8. Jesus tells us that we will be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria (In our neighborhoods, cities, countries, and in all the world.)
5. Personal response.

Message 2 (Page 7)

1. Personal response.
2. John 15:12: Love one another as Jesus has loved you.
3. Personal response.
4. The laying down of our lives cannot accomplish what Jesus did. While we know many who have laid down their physical lives for their fellow man, we may be called to a different kind of sacrifice. In many cases, a small sacrifice, such as giving up what you'd like to do and help someone else instead, are "laying down your life" for another.
Even today, in persecuted areas, people are literally laying their lives down rather than renounce their faith.
5. John 1:12: Knowing we are God's very own children should bring us great joy.
John 15:5: We cannot work up joy or any other spiritual fruit in our lives, but as we remain in Jesus, the Vine, He will fill us with joy and all other good things.
John 15:15: (like John 1:12). Look at the great status Jesus gives us: He choose us to be His friends! This must certainly bring joy to our hearts.

Message 3 (Page 8)

1. Isaiah 52:7: We have the responsibility and privilege to proclaim the Gospel.
2. 1 John 3:17: We have the opportunity and responsibility to reach out and help others. It may mean that we have to roll up our sleeves and/or give financially to those in need.
3. James 2:14-17: Faith will be evidenced by good works.
4. John 6:1-14: The steward was the boy who gave away his lunch (two loaves and five fish) so Jesus could multiply his gifts to feed the 5,000.
5. Deuteronomy 34:7: Moses led God's people from the Egyptian bondage. At the age of 40, he killed an Egyptian who was fighting with a Hebrew and then fled to the wilderness where God prepared Him to lead His people. At the age of 80, Moses went back to Egypt and led his

people to the Promised Land. Moses lived to the age of 120 so he served God for 80 years with stamina and vigor.

6. Acts 22:3-11: Saul of Tarsus who later became Paul was a Jew. Some consider Paul the greatest missionary of all time. He traveled thousands of miles to bring the Gospel to all, especially the Gentiles, started several churches, and wrote over half of the New Testament. He was punished for his faith and suffered many afflictions, including martyrdom.
7. Peter and John were two of Jesus' disciples. Because they were fisherman by trade and uneducated, people were awed at their courage. The only explanation for their ability was they "had been with Jesus."

Message 4 (Page 9)

1. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5: God's grace empowered the Macedonians to give generously even though they were experiencing extreme poverty. They gave to help the Christian Jews in Jerusalem who were experiencing drought and famine.
2. Luke 10:25-37: God's grace worked through the Good Samaritan to help the injured person.
3. Acts 5:17-21: God's grace was shown when God had an angel open the prison door, giving the apostles the opportunity to share the Gospel.
4. Acts 9:36-43: God gave Peter power to raise Dorcas from the dead.
5. Personal response.
6. You are not just a steward on Sundays or when you choose to be. God chooses us and makes us His stewards. God molds us into being a steward, and then we do acts of stewardship.

October's Focus: "Telling Others about Jesus (Page 11)

1. Acts 4:12: Without faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, they will spend eternity in hell.
2. 1 Timothy 2:4: God wants all people to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.
3. 1 Peter 2:9: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession." We are to proclaim Him to all people.
4. Matthew 28:18-20
 - a. Great Commission
 - b. Go and make disciples, baptize, and teach
 - c. God will always be with us
 - d. Personal response

Message 1 (Page 12)

1. Both God's Word and water are necessary. We need God's Word for our spiritual nourishment. Without His Word, we will die spiritually. In the same way, we need water to survive physically. Both are refreshing and life-giving.
2. Personal response.
3. 1 Corinthians 3:5-9:
 - a. Paul is an apostle. Apollos, along with Paul, is a servant of the Word. Paul planted the word through his preaching. Apollos watered or nurtured the faith. God gave the growth.
 - b. God is responsible for the growth or outcome.
4. Galatians 6:9: God's principle of sowing and reaping is referred to in this verse. God promises that by sowing or doing good, we will one day reap the benefits of doing good. Because God will bless us spiritually (possibly physically and financially) for doing good, we should never tire in helping and doing good to others.

5. In order to get better in sports, drama, music, or academics, there needs to be lots of practice and effort. As God's people, we are called to love our neighbors, and, with God's help, we can be faithful to serve others. If we become disciplined in how we use our time, we will be more available to serve others and serve in our church. In the same way, if we become better managers of our money, we will be able to give more. If we develop our talents, we have more skills to use in serving. As we spend time in God's Word, God changes our hearts, and He will work through us.
6. John 15:5: Paul abided or remained in Jesus who strengthened him. Paul didn't rely on his wisdom and strength but on God's.
2 Corinthians 12:9: God's grace empowered Paul, and he depended upon God's power.
7. Personal response.

Message 2 (Page 14)

1. Mark 16:16: Whoever does not believe will be condemned or go to hell.
2. Knowing that people will go either to Heaven or Hell, we want to help share the Gospel with as many as possible so they can be saved.
3. 1 Peter 3:1-2: The Apostle Paul is encouraging wives to submit to their husbands. When husbands see the wonderful behavior and conduct of their wives, they will seek to know the reason for their character and conduct which they will discover is the power of the Holy Spirit working in their lives.
4. The phrase "Talk is cheap" is often true. People often talk a good game, but their actions tell what they really believe. If our faith is shown in our daily lives, people will take notice and will be interested in knowing what motivates us to do what we do. Actions do speak louder than words.
5. 1 Peter 3:15: Always be ready to give an answer for your faith. That means you need to know God's Word as well as you can.
6. Personal response.
7. Personal response.

Message 3 (Page 15)

1. John 1:41: Andrew went to find his brother Simon to tell him about the Messiah.
John 1:45: Philip found Nathanael to tell him about the Messiah.
2. Personal response.
3. Andrew and Philip were older and left their vocations. You are in school so that would not change, but some of your activities may need to be changed to follow Jesus more closely.
4. Matthew 10:19: Jesus promises us that we will not be speechless. God will provide the words.
5. Hebrews 13:20-21: God will equip you so you can do His will.
6. Acts 4:13; 23-24, 29: Jesus gives His people boldness and confidence to serve and witness for Him. It is not with our strength that we can share the Good News. God showed how He could change the world with 12 disciples who were uneducated common men.
7. 2 Corinthians 4:5-6: We are not to lift ourselves up. We decrease as God increases. God's light in us shines through us.

Message 4 (Page 16)

1. Ephesians 2:8-9: We are saved by grace through faith
2. Ephesians 2:10: God's grace changes us and empowers us to do good works which He has prepared in advance for us to do.

3. Good works give evidence to our faith. God uses our good works to help and support others and to extend His kingdom (Refer to James 2:14-26).
4. 1 John 3:17-18: If we have money or possessions and see others in need, we have a responsibility to share with those who are in need.
5. We pray for people. We also should be prepared to lend helping hands.
6. Personal response.

November's Focus: "Giving Faithfully" (Page 19)

1. God's giving nature: His most inexpressible gift is the gift of His Son, Jesus, Who came to us a babe in the manger. He gave us life and His beautiful creation to live in.
Jesus lived the perfect life in our place and then suffered and died so we can live as forgiven and redeemed people.
The Holy Spirit gives us His healing and comforting spirit, prays for us (Romans 8:26), and counsels us (John 14:15-17).
2. Colossians 3:17: In all things including our giving, we need to do all things in His name giving thanks.
3. Luke 21:1-4: The Poor Widow's gift made no impact on any temple or church budget. She gave it because she trusted in the Lord to provide for her. Her gift expressed her love. Jesus was pleased with her gift because it came from a loving heart.
4. 2 Corinthians 9:7: God loves those who give cheerfully, not out of obligation or guilt.
5. By nature, we are sinful people who are selfish and greedy.
Personal response.
6. Giving the first part implies that you are putting God first as you give Him the first portion of the money you earn or receive as a gift.
7. 1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 8:12: God does not want his people to give haphazardly or give only their leftovers. He is honored when we give the first part of our income or gifts and if we give a percentage or a proportionate amount based on our blessings.

Message 1 (Page 20)

1. Personal response.
2. Galatians 6:10: We are to do good to all people, especially believers. This may involve sharing with them financially. Those who have can give to those who are in need. If we are in need, others should be encouraged to give to us (Refer to 2 Corinthians 8:14).
3. Acts 20:35: By nature, we are selfish, but, by God's grace, we can give. In order for us to give generously, we need God to open up our hearts. God blesses those who give with the joy of giving.
4. Acts 4:32-37: The believers willingly shared so that no person was in need. Out of love for God and others, they gave what they had to those in need.

Message 2 (Page 21)

1. Moses' message was that it was God Who gave them the ability to earn money. God deserves the credit for what you do and accomplish.
2. Deuteronomy 16:16-17: We are not to come before the Lord empty-handed. We honor God by bringing Him offerings from thankful hearts.
3. We may forget God because we see ourselves earning money from our own sweat and effort. Because of our pride, we fail to acknowledge God as the One Who has given us our intelligence and physical abilities.

4. Malachi 3:6-10: God commanded the people of Israel to give a tithe, which is one-tenth of their income, from their harvest or produce.

Message 3 (Page 23)

1. Personal response.
2. Personal response.
3. The boy's gift of loaves of bread and fish fed 5,000. God can take our small gifts and multiply them many times over to accomplish what He wants to accomplish. We just need to give and God will do the rest.

Message 4 (Page 23)

1. Giving is both a privilege and a responsibility. We can give because God first gave to us. As we study God's Word, we begin to see how far below God's standards we have fallen. We see how great our sin is. Then we read, while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). When that knowledge sinks in, our hearts and minds are filled with gratitude and love for our Savior and we will want to obey His command to love others as He loves us (John 15:17). Part of loving others is helping where we can, giving encouragement, and giving financially as we are able. When our giving is a response out of love, God will give us joy in our giving, helping, and serving.
We have a need to give because God is a giving God. It is His nature to give. When we give, we reflect the heart of God. Giving gives us joy. We feel God's peace because we are being faithful to His direction and encouragement to give.
2. 2 Corinthians 9:7: God wants people to give with a cheerful attitude.
3. God's grace is needed because we would rather keep or hoard what we have. By nature, we are not giving people. Our hearts need to change before we can give generously with giving hearts.
4. With changed hearts, we will look for opportunities to give and to share. The more we give the more we want to give. We experience God's love and the joy from giving. We know that the mind grows by putting more information into it.

December's Focus: "Stewardship Messages for Advent" (Page 25)

1. The prepared virgins had oil in their lamps.
2. The unprepared virgins did not have sufficient oil in their lamps.
3. We do not know when Jesus will come again so we are always to be prepared. Our minds and hearts are prepared through the nourishment of our faith as we spend time in God's Word, participate in the Lord's Supper, talk to God in prayer, and attend church regularly.
4. Personal response.

Message 1 (Page 26)

1. They brought an adoring and worshipful attitude to pay respect and honor to the Christ child. The first thing they did was to bow in reverence.
2. Matthew 2:1-18: God warned the Wise Men in a dream not to return to Herod, so they departed to their country by a different route.
3. Personal response. God's Word is our surest and most beneficial source of wisdom for our lives. It is also wise to seek counsel and advice from Godly people.
4. Personal response. Time is a real treasure to be shared, especially with older people.

Message 2 (Page 28)

1. Luke 2:15-18, 20: After they found Mary and Joseph and the Christ child lying in the manger, the shepherds returned praising God and telling others of the glory they had witnessed. They shared the Good News that they had seen. They weren't learned theologians who expounded on the Scriptures. They spoke about what they knew to be true.
2. Personal response.
3. Your behavior can give God glory or it can dishonor Him. Your behavior can promote Christianity or it can turn people off. If you behave poorly as a Christian and others see your poor conduct, it will reflect poorly about your faith and Christianity. Others will wonder why they would want to be Christians if Christians act so badly. In contrast, you can exhibit such compassion and love for others that you will interest people to know about you and Jesus. You can let your light shine (Matthew 5:16)!

Message 3 (Page 29)

1. Through faith, we know we are sinners. You and I need a Savior. God gave us each of us the perfect gift.
2. Acts 20:35: Christmas is the giving season. Giving starts with God gifts of His Son to us. The Magi gave themselves and their gifts. The shepherds gave their time. It is a joy to give. Think of the great anticipation you have when you are giving a special gift to your parents, brother or sister, or friends. You can experience the truth of Jesus' words for yourself: It is more blessed to give than to receive.
3. Personal response.

Message 4 (Page 30)

1. God needs nothing. What He wants is our love and devotion.
2. 1 Timothy 2:4: God's desires all people to be saved. Unfortunately many reject God or have never even heard about Him.
3. You and I are God's hands, feet, and mouth to the world. We are His plan to carry the message of the Gospel to all people.

January's Focus: "Becoming a Money-Wise Teen" (Page 31)

1. Deuteronomy 8:18: God gives people the ability to work and make money. He gives people intelligence, creativity, hands, eyes, and all things. We can decide whether to work hard or to be slothful.

Message 1 (Page 32)

1. We honor God by acknowledging that He has enabled us to have money and that He is the owner. We honor Him when we give our money cheerfully and willingly to Him through our church and Christian causes. We honor Him when we use our money to help others. We honor Him when we spend money in a disciplined and orderly way. We dishonor Him by believing that our money is our money alone. We dishonor Him by being selfish with it. We dishonor Him by wasting it.
2. Psalm 24:1; Haggai 2:8: These verses clearly tell us that our money and all things belong to God.
3. Knowing that we are stewards of God's money should cause us to seek His guidance about how to manage it.
4. 1 Timothy 6:17-19
 - a. We are to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.

- b. We are not to be haughty nor put our hopes in our riches.
- c. When we share, we are storing up treasures in heaven.

Message 2 (Page 33)

1. The Rich Fool was foolish because He gave God no credit or thanks for his success as a farmer nor did he have any desire to share his wealth with others. His life centered on himself. With his hard heart, he likely spent his life condemned.
2. His money was only going to be used to “eat, drink, and be merry.” He lived for the moment, focused only on himself.
3. 1 Chronicles 29:10-14: No, the Rich Fool didn’t thank God. Thoughts of God, much less gratitude to Him never entered the Rich Fool’s mind. Conversely, King David acknowledged that all his gifts came from the hand of God.
2 Corinthians 8:12-15: No, the Rich Fool had no thoughts of, much less desire to, share his wealth with others. He stored it all up for himself. The Apostle Paul encouraged those with abundance (such as the Rich Fool) to share with those who were in need. God’s people should be eager to help those who are in need.
4. The interest in or the love of money and what money can buy can cause people to become completely preoccupied with it. A person’s life can become so obsessed with having the latest and best things that they will do anything for money. For some, money represents power. With all this focus on money and things, God is left out.
5. 1 Timothy 6:9-10: The love of money. It is the root of all sorts of evil.
6. It provides you with “stuff.” Some look at money as the answer to all of life’s problems. Money will solve every dilemma.

Message 3 (Page 34)

1. Colossians 3:23: In our work and all things, our goal should be to honor God and serve Him by serving others. No matter who your boss is, the one you are serving is God.
2. As a young person, work experience will help you discover your interests. It will help you to become independent. It will help you to get along with others and be part of a team. It will provide you with money that you can learn how to manage at an early age.
3. Matthew 25:14-30: Money is a trust given to us by God. He expects us to be faithful and accountable. As you prove your faithfulness with a smaller income, God will entrust you with more. God is unhappy with those who do nothing or fail to develop what they have been given.
4. For most teenagers the jobs that are available do not pay huge wages. Many will work for minimum wages, so this is the opportunity to gain experience and discover your interests. After-school and summer jobs have provided impressive resume credentials to those applying for “real jobs” after they’ve finished college or technical training.

Message 4 (Page 35)

1. Proverbs 21:20: Wise people do not squander their money on pleasure or foolish things. The foolish often don’t give thought to the future. The wise will save for the future.
2. Proverbs 6:6-8: Scripture shares how even the ant saves and prepares for lean months by storing what he has. They do not slumber or sit idle.
3. A saver is future oriented. He/she is a planner. A saver is disciplined enough to say “no” from time to time. A saver is patient and committed. Many savers set goals for themselves.
4. Personal response. Keeping up with your peers will cause you to spend your money and not save. It may be difficult not to buy the latest CD or DVD. It may be difficult not to go see a movie. It may be difficult to refrain from eating out so often. Committing to save is difficult.

5. Proverbs 13:11: It takes patience to accumulate or save money. A little savings over a period of time will add up.
6. Saving money involves effort. It is so easy to spend money so you can enjoy things today. In order to save money, you will sometimes have to do without. You have to be able to say “no” at times. You will need discipline and commitment.
7. A need is something that is important or essential for you to live. A need relates to food, shelter, or clothing. A want is something that is not needed but something more to enjoy. Do you need the newest tablet, iPhone, or CD? If you were to spend less money on wants, you would have more money to save.

February’s Focus: “Faithful Stewards of Time” (Page 37)

1. Personal response.
2. Personal response. Do you willingly follow the crowd? What are your peers currently pressuring you into doing? What kind of crowd do you hang out with?
3. Ephesians 5:15-16: God wants His people to be wise with their time. He warns against the evil influences of the world causing unwise use of time.
4. 2 Corinthians 9:6: If you sow time wisely, you will reap the benefits of faithful sowing of your time.
5. A Christian should be spending some time in prayer, daily Bible reading, and regular worship. Jesus said, “*Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (Matthew 6:21). Our time will focus on what we treasure.

Message 1 (Page 38)

1. Just as Jesus came not to be served but to serve so are we to serve. Being obedient to God’s admonition to serve others gives us the joy of being obedient to our calling. If we bless others with our time, we will be blessed (Sowing and reaping).
2. Personal response.
3. God is honored when we spend our time stewarding our relationship with Him. We steward our relationship with God when we spend time reading His Word, praying, and attending worship. We please and honor God when we serve others.
4. Ephesians 2:10: Good works are the fruit of our faith. Good works are acts done in and through Jesus. Using our time in service for others is the key. We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves. We are to help those in need with our time, talents, and money. In this Scripture passage, we read that God prepared good works for us to do. As you study His Word, He will open your eyes to see opportunities all around you to do His good works. We need to remember what Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:40: “*Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to Me.*”
5. Luke 10:38-42: Mary spent time with Jesus. Martha was too busy to spend time at Jesus’ feet because she was focused on her preparations in the kitchen.

Message 2 (Page 39)

1. Personal response.
2. Colossians 3:16-17: God seeks a relationship with each of us. Spiritual disciplines are helpful because they put us in positions where God can work in us. The discipline of reading and studying God’s Word, being disciplined in our prayer life, being faithful in our church attendance, and participating in Christian fellowship will allow God’s Word to dwell in us and give us thankful hearts for who God is and what He has done for us.

3. We spend time with what and with whom we value. As we spend time in God's Word, the Holy Spirit deepens our faith, causing us to want to spend even more time with Him in prayer, reading the Bible, and seeking to serve others, especially by bringing the life-giving message of the Gospel. If we spend less time with God, we distance ourselves from Him.
4. Personal response.

Message 3 (Page 40)

1. Personal response.
2. Matthew 6:1-4: Our motivation for doing good deeds is not to be recognized by people. Our good deeds are to be done to honor and please God.

Message 4 (Page 42)

1. Who we are causes us to do what we do. It is who we are or "being" before it is "doing." With changed hearts, we act as His stewards. Knowing we are God's adopted children and His stewards causes us act like His children and stewards. We see our calling as His stewards as a wonderful honor.
2. As we spend time in God's Word, we see God's grace and love at work in our lives. With changed hearts, we want to follow His ways and fulfill His purpose for our lives. Our attitude changes from "got" to serve to "want" to serve.
3. 1 Corinthians 4:2: Stewards are called to manage faithfully what God has entrusted to them.
4. Romans 14:12: We will be called to give an account to God of how we've used His gifts.

March's Focus: "Stewardship Messages for Lent" (Page 43)

1. Personal response.
2. Personal response.
3. Through faith that God gives us, we are enabled to see and understand God's grace at work in our lives. We don't deserve anything but death (Romans 6:23), but God, in His great mercy, has given His Son to die in our place.
4. Personal response. Knowing that God was willing to send His one and only Son to die on the cross so we can live as forgiven and redeemed people should make a difference in how we think and act. In spite of our unworthiness, God demonstrated His love for us (Romans 5:8). Through faith, we can come somewhat understand God's love, grace, and mercy.

Message 1 (Page 44)

1. Acts 1:8: Matthew 28:18-20: With the power of the Holy Spirit, we are to share with others the life-changing and life-saving Gospel. We are to witness to and teach those in families, our neighborhoods, our cities, country, and the world.
2. Jeremiah 29:11-14: John 3:16: Through our God-given faith, we know that Jesus suffered and died for all people. We receive His grace of forgiveness by grace through faith. God has a plan for each of us, and it is a plan to give us "hope and a future."
3. God has given me faith and sustained my faith.

Message 2 (page 45)

1. Because of original sin, we are undeserving people who do not merit God's grace and love. On earth, we will always be sinful people. By grace, we become more like Jesus as His Spirit, through His Word and Sacraments, transforming us into His image.
2. Polluted garments (filthy rags) Faith

3. In Lent, we examine our sins and focus on our need to repent of those sins. God's plan for our salvation involved Jesus' suffering and dying on the Cross for the atonement of our sins. It was Jesus' innocent blood not ours. Mark 16 helps us to look forward to the joy and the victory of the resurrection.
4. Personal response.

Message 3 (Page 46)

1. Personal response. Being surprised, finding yourself in new surroundings, doing something for the first time can cause fear. Allowing God to be in control reduces fear. Placing ourselves in God's hands, we can find peace and comfort in the toughest situations.
2. Personal response. Changed hearts should give evidence to your faith. Your words and deeds should be an example to others of Jesus' light in your life. In the book of James, we are told that faith without works is dead (James 2:17).
3. 1 Peter 3:13-17: *"Always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you."* We are to be prepared to tell others about Jesus and His love.

Message 4 (Page 47)

1. Acts 2: 14-41: This same Peter who had denied Jesus just weeks prior, gives a powerful sermon on Pentecost about the Holy Spirit Who is being sent to give forgiveness to those who repent of their sins. As a result, *"about three thousand souls"* that day believed in Jesus.
2. Acts 2:42-47: The early believers were totally devoted to the Lord. No one had need because those who had a surplus gave freely and willingly to those who were in need. They held things in common. Because of their witness, they had *"favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."*
3. Jesus tells us through John that we will have to roll up our sleeves to help others or may have to sacrifice financially to help fellow believers who are in need.
4. Isaiah 41:10: God is with us and will strengthen us.
5. 2 Corinthians 9:10-11. God throughout Scripture encourages us to help those in need. The Apostle Paul tells that God will enrich us so we can be generous to others.
6. 2 Corinthians 9:12-15: Through our generosity, God will be glorified. Others will see God working through our lives.

April's Focus: "Using your Talents Faithfully" (Page 49)

1. Personal response.
2. 1 Peter 4:10: God gives gifts to all of us. They are gifts that are to be used in serving others. These gifts are not our personal possessions but are to be used according to God's leading.
3. Exodus 4:1-17: Moses used excuses to not have to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.
4. Matthew 28:20: We are not on our own. Jesus promised, *"I am with you always."*
5. You are saying "no" to the God Who has created you, sustains your life, and equips you with gifts to do His works.

Message 1 (Page 50)

1. Personal response. Through faith, you can realize that your gifts, talents, and abilities are all gifts from God, which should cause you to give thanks.
2. Some members are teachers, leaders, administrators, workers, singers, gardeners, evangelists.

3. Church members suffer in two different ways. When a member of the church suffers, there is an outpouring of concern, compassion, and help. In another way, the ministry of the church is disrupted when members are not able to use their gifts and talents in the ministry of the church.
4. People are watching, so our actions are very important. We are to act counter-cultural. If we behave contrary to God's will, others could question the sincerity of our faith or religion.

Message 2 (Page 51)

1. One servant received five talents, one received two, and the other received one. Their master (God) knew their capabilities to handle and develop their talents.
2. The master expected the servants to be faithful and wise in the management of what they had been given. God gives each of us gifts that we are use and develop. We dishonor God if we just sit on and do nothing with our gifts.
3. To each of the servants who received the five and two talents, he said, "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*" The master was very critical toward the servant who did nothing with his one talent. To him, he said, "*You wicked slothful servant.*" We should all want to hear "*Well done, good and faithful servant.*"

Message 3 (Page 52)

1. To be available means that we are willing to follow and do God's will. It means that we will be willing to change our plans to follow God's plans. We will be willing to stop what we are doing in order to use the opportunities God places before us to serve His people.
2. God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. His disciples were ordinary people, but Jesus accomplished great things through them. When God uses us as ordinary people to accomplish things, He gets the credit. It is not by our strength, but by God's, that His work gets done.
3. Much more can be done using God's strength. Relying on ourselves, we will fail. Using our own strength, we may accomplish some things, but what we are able to do won't last, nor will it bring glory to God to whom it is due.

Message 4 (Page 53)

1. God was with Joseph. Joseph placed his complete trust in God.
2. Joseph was abandoned by his brothers and taken away from his father. He was sold as a slave in a foreign land. He was placed in prison, falsely accused, and forgotten. Throughout these chapters, thought, we read "The Lord was with Joseph."
3. Personal response.

May's Focus: "Serving Others" (Page 55)

1. Personal response. A self-serving person is a person who is serving for his/her own benefit. That benefit could be for recognition, seeking a special favor, earning a friendship, etc. A true servant has the best interests of the person being served.
2. Personal response.
3. 1 Peter 4:10: Each has a received a gift. The gift or gifts are to be used to serve others. We are stewards of God's grace.

Message 1 (Page 56)

1. Luke 14:12-14: We can serve with the wrong motive of expecting to be repaid.

2. Jesus healed the blind, the lepers, the sick, etc. He provided comfort. He healed people spiritually and physically. He forgave people of their sins. He raised the dead. He died to earn eternal life in Heaven for all who believe.
3. Philippians 2:5-8: Jesus took on the attitude of a servant. Jesus “*humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.*” We are to have that same attitude of humility, seeking to be servants rather than to be served.
4. Philippians 2:9-11: God exalted Jesus and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name. At that name every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord!
5. Matthew 20:26-28: We are called to be servants. We are not to see greatness for ourselves but put others above us, because that is what Christ did for us.

Message 2 (Page 57)

1. Luke 10:25-37: The Samaritan stopped to provide first aid. After dressing the wounded man’s wounds, he put him on his donkey and took him to an inn. He also took care of the expenses at the inn.
2. Matthew 25:40 and Ephesians 6:7: Jesus tells us that when we do acts of service to those who need our help, we are doing those acts of kindness to Jesus.

Message 3 (Page 58)

1. Mark 12:30-31: God’s great commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind and the second great commandment is to love our neighbors as ourselves. Knowing what God wants should motivate us to follow His command to serve others.
2. With our own strength, we are unable to serve faithfully. When God changes our hearts, we are motivated to serve others. By nature, we are self-serving people interested only in ourselves. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, God changes us.
3. With God working within us, we develop a serving attitude. As opportunities to serve become known to us, we are ready to serve. With a servant’s heart, we are willing to change our agenda or schedules to make ourselves available.
4. True service is when you commit yourself to help or serve someone without thought or benefit to you. Your focus is on others. A self-serving person may help someone but is also seeking some benefit in return.

Message 4 (Page 59)

1. Personal response.
2. 1 Corinthians 12:14-31: Paul is comparing the work of the church to the human body. For the human body to function properly, the parts of the body need to be healthy and work together. If a body part stops functioning, it could cause the death of the body or handicap it. In the same way, each person in the church, the Body of Christ, needs to do his part so the church can do its ministry.
3. Personal response. Some common excuses could be: Too busy, I’m not qualified, others could do a better job, and the work doesn’t interest me.