

# Taking Care of the Gifts God Gives Us



## SABBATH—MARCH 3

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Colossians 1:16–18; Hebrews 4:14–16; 3 John 3; Genesis 6:13–18; Revelation 14:6–12.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “God chose us to live pure [sin-free] lives. He wants us to be holy” (1 Thessalonians 4:7, NlrV).

**GOD CHOSE US** to look after the things He put in our care. This work includes more than just taking care of the things we own and managing our money. It is easy for us to misunderstand what being a good manager means. We cannot be Christians without being good managers. The church would not be able to run smoothly without our working together to take good care of everything God gives us.

“Taking good care of everything God gives us is not just an idea or a teaching. Instead, it is love in action. Being a good manager is also a choice you make. This choice includes our agreeing to work together with God and others to take care of God’s gifts. Every part of our lives will be changed by our choice to be good managers.”—LeRoy E. Froom, *Stewardship [Taking care of everything God gives us] in Its Larger [More important] Aspects [Different views or ways of looking at the topic]* (Mountain View: CA, Pacific Press® Publishing Association, 1929), page 5, adapted.

What are some of the most important teachings about being a good manager? This week we will answer this question. Also, we will use an interesting word picture to help us understand how being a good manager is important to the Christian experience. And the word picture we will use is a wheel.



The church would not be able to run smoothly without our working together to take good care of everything God gives us.

## JESUS IS THE REASON FOR EVERYTHING WE DO (Colossians 1:16–18)

God gave us the whole Bible to show us Jesus (John 5:39). We are Jesus' followers. So, we need to understand who Jesus is and what He did for us. He paid for our sins on the cross. He "came to give his life to save many people" (Mark 10:45, ICB). Jesus has all power in heaven and earth (Matthew 28:18). All things are under His control (John 13:3). Jesus' name is far above the name of anyone else. And one day, everyone will kneel down to worship Jesus (Philippians 2:9–11).

Ellen G. White tells us, "Jesus is alive. He is the reason for everything we do."—*Evangelism [Spreading the Good News about Jesus everywhere]*, page 186, adapted.

Jesus is the reason for everything we do to be wise managers. Our power comes from Him. Jesus is the reason our lives are worth living. Our lives need to show to everyone that Jesus has first place in our hearts. Paul understood this truth. He experienced many problems in life. But he always remembered his reason for living: "To me the only important thing about living is Christ [Jesus]" (Philippians 1:21, ICB).

**Read Colossians 1:16–18; Romans 8:21; and 2 Corinthians 5:17. How do these verses show us that we must give Jesus first place in everything we do?**



**Our lives show to everyone that Jesus must have first place in our hearts.**

We will not be good managers of the gifts God gives us until we put Jesus first in our lives (Galatians 2:20). After all, Jesus is the reason for our belief in "the great hope and the coming of our great God" (Titus 2:13, NLV). And "Christ [Jesus] was there before anything was made. And all things continue because of him" (Colossians 1:17, ICB). Here is where the word picture of the wheel can help explain just how important Jesus is to our lives. At the center of the wheel is the axle. The axle is a bar. A wheel is locked to both ends of this bar. The axle bar carries the whole weight of the wagon. And the axle allows the wheels to turn. In the same way, Jesus is the "axle" at the center of our lives. He gives us the same solid support an axle gives to the wagon wheels. He is the solid and lasting center of our lives (Hebrews 13:8). That is why Jesus says, "You can do nothing without Me" (John 15:5, NLV).

**How can you be sure Jesus is the center of your life?**

## WHAT IS JESUS DOING FOR US RIGHT NOW? (1 John 2:1)

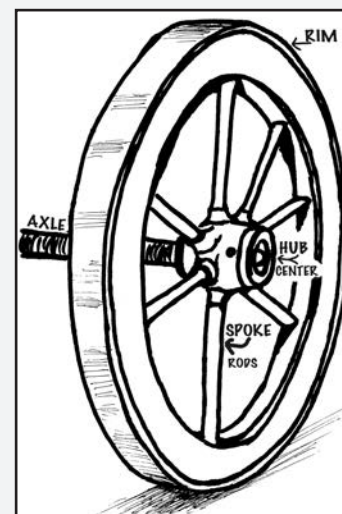
Did you know that the work Jesus does for us in heaven is connected to our work as good managers? The work that Jesus does right now for us in heaven also is very important to what we believe. Our work as managers is a part of what we believe too. So, Jesus' work in heaven and our work as managers are connected. "Our faith begins with understanding the work Jesus is doing right now for us in heaven."—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism [Spreading the Good News about Jesus]*, page 221, adapted. So, we see that it is very important to understand how our work as managers fits in with what Jesus does for us in heaven. Let us go back to the word picture of the wheel to help us understand. But this time we are going to see in our minds the wheel of a chariot. A chariot is a carriage with two wheels. Chariots were pulled by horses. People stood in chariots and used chariots in races and wars in Bible times. The Bible talks about a chariot wheel in 1 Kings 7:33.

Now, let us imagine that the center part of the chariot wheel is a word picture that explains the work Jesus does in heaven right now. This center part of the wheel is locked to the axle. We learned yesterday that the two wheels turn around the axle. The axle makes the wheel stay on the chariot. The axle also makes the chariot safe. Jesus' death (2 Timothy 1:10) gives us the same support the axle gives the chariot. His death for us makes Him safe enough to trust in (Hebrews 6:19, 20).

**Read 1 John 2:1; Hebrews 4:14–16; and Revelation 14:7. What do these verses tell us about Jesus' work for us right now in heaven?**

Jesus' work for us right now in heaven helps us understand the truth of God's plan to save us from sin and His promise to make us new again. Jesus now works for us in the Most Holy Place in God's temple in heaven. In the Most Holy Place, we see God's law and the work God does as our Judge. In God's law and in His work for us as our Judge, we see God's promise to save us by the blood of Jesus. Our work as managers must point people to this wonderful truth of God's plan to save us.

**Read Hebrews 4:14–16. What hope do we get from knowing that Jesus works in heaven for us right now?**

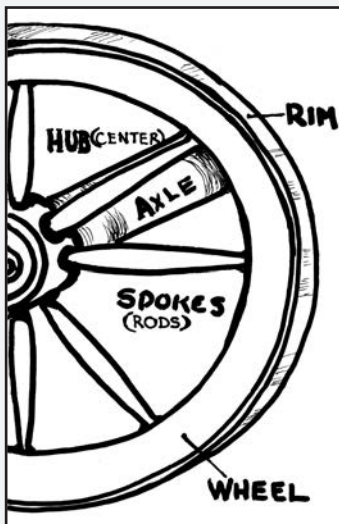


**Jesus' death gives us the same support the axle gives the chariot. His death makes our faith in Him safe enough for our trust in God (Hebrews 6:19, 20).**

**JESUS IS THE CENTER OF OUR BELIEFS (John 14:6)**

What Jesus is doing for us in heaven right now is very important. Jesus' work in heaven shows us the reason for His death on the cross. Jesus' work also shows us the wonderful truth of God's plan to save us from sin and give us everlasting life. So, we must connect all our Bible teachings to the Good News that Jesus saves us from sin. This important truth is the same as the center of a wheel. All our other teachings and beliefs come out of this truth in the same way that spokes or rods come out of the center of the wheel to the rim. The rim is the edge of the wheel.

“Jesus died on the cross to pay the price for our sins. This truth is the center of all we believe. All other truths come out of this truth. . . . We must study the Savior's wonderful gift of dying for us on the cross. Then we will grow in God's loving-favor and in knowledge.”—Ellen G. White Comments [Thoughts], *The SDA Bible Commentary [Explanation]*, volume 5, page 1137, adapted.



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**What did Jesus mean when He said He was “ ‘the Truth’ ” (John 14:6, NLV)? What does Jesus say about the truth in John 17:17? What does Jesus say about the truth that is the same in both verses? Now read 3 John 3. What does John say we must do with the truth?**

Our teachings change who we are and how we live our lives. That is because teachings are not just ideas. All true teaching is set on the truth about Jesus. Who we are as Seventh-day Adventists comes from what we believe. Our teachings come from the Bible. They make us who we are.

We work for God as managers of His gifts to us. Our work as God's managers includes following Bible truth. We must follow the Bible to make our lives better. Paul tells us to get rid of “the old person you used to be. Have nothing to do with your old sinful [full of sin] life. It was sinful because of [your] being fooled into following bad desires. Let your minds and hearts be made new. You must become a new person and be godlike [holy in how you think and act]. Then you will be made right with God and have a true holy life” (Ephesians 4:21–24, NLV).

This verse in Ephesians shows us what it means to know the truth and to follow it. Being a good manager is not only about believing the correct teachings. We must follow the truth and teach other people to follow it too.

**THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES (Revelation 14:6–12)**

How many times in the Bible did God warn people that life on this earth would end? Only two times. The first time, God warned Noah (Genesis 6:13–18; Matthew 24:37). The second time, God warned us through the three angels' messages (Revelation 14:6–12). These messages show us what will happen in the future. We understand more about these messages now than we understood in the past. But the truth of the messages has stayed the same. That truth is the teaching that we are made right with God by faith in Jesus. This teaching about being made right with God by believing in Jesus is “the truth of the third angel’s message.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism [Spreading the Good News about Jesus]*, page 190, adapted. So, God gave us this message to share with all the people on this earth. Jesus and His death for us on the cross are at the center of this message.

**Read Revelation 14:6–12. What is the most important idea we get from the messages in these verses? What are these messages saying to all the people on the earth? What is God telling us to do with these messages? What does it mean to be good managers of the truth found in these messages?**

God commands Seventh-day Adventists to share the truth of the three angels' messages with people everywhere. This truth will help everyone who believes it to get ready for the Second Coming of Jesus. After all, people must make a choice about everlasting life. So, good managers work together with God to share His truth with other people (2 Corinthians 5:20; 2 Corinthians 6:1–4).

“God chose Seventh-day Adventists to protect the truth and to share it with people everywhere. God gave Seventh-day Adventists the last warning for a dying planet. Wonderful truth from the Bible is shining on the minds of Seventh-day Adventists. God gave them a very important work to do for Him. Seventh-day Adventists must share the three angels' messages with people everywhere. No other work is more important than this work. So, Seventh-day Adventists must not allow anything else to take their attention away from doing this work.”—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies [Messages] for the Church*, volume 9, page 19, adapted.

We must share this great truth with everyone.



**God gave us the truth of the third angel’s message to share with all the people on this earth.**

## TAKING CARE OF EVERYTHING GOD GIVES US (1 Peter 1:15, 16)

Jesus wants us to live holy lives. Jesus' life shows us what living a holy life means. His life also shows us what it means to work as a good manager of God's gifts (Hebrews 9:14). We should live our lives to make God happy. We make God happy when we take care of everything He gives us. Then we show what it means to live a holy life.

**Read 1 Peter 1:15, 16 and Hebrews 12:14. What truth do these verses teach us that is the same? What do “be holy” (1 Peter 1:15, NLV) and “live a holy life” (Hebrews 12:14, NLV) mean? What do these ideas have to do with working as good managers of God's gifts?**

Let us go back to our word picture of a wheel again. We will use it to help us understand what it means to act as a good manager. The Romans learned that a wheel lasted longer if a thin strip of iron was put around the rim. The rim is the edge of the wheel. The maker of the wheel heated the iron strip to make it just big enough to fit over the rim. Then the wheel was dipped in cold water. The cold water helped shrink the iron strip tight around the wheel. The wheel was put on the chariot. You will remember that a chariot was a special carriage pulled by horses. It was used in races and wars. The strip of iron around the wheel touched the road when the wheel turned.

The iron strip around the wheel is a word picture that helps us understand how to do our work as good managers for God. Taking care of everything God gives us is the same as the iron strip on the wheel. In the same way, our work as managers is the “outer covering” of our lives that everyone sees. People notice how we take care of everything God gives us. They see we live to make God happy. What we do and say each day touches the lives of other people in the same way as the iron on the wheel touches the road.

What we do has a lot of power. People remember what we do. So, our actions must be under Jesus' control. We must trust God to help us live our lives under His control. The Bible promises us: “[We] can do all things because Christ [Jesus] gives [us] the strength” (Philippians 4:13, NLV).

**How does your life show Jesus to other people? How can you let more of Jesus' holy life show in your life?**



**Taking care of everything God gives us is the same as the iron strip on the wheel. Our work as manager is the outer covering of our lives that everyone sees.**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** What do you think happened over time to the wheels of a chariot? A chariot was a special carriage used in Bible times. It was pulled by horses and used in races and wars. The wheels of the chariot became old when the chariot was used a lot. The iron strip on the wheel would stretch and fall off the rim. Then the iron strip would need to be hammered and fixed. The strip would need to be put back on the wheel again.

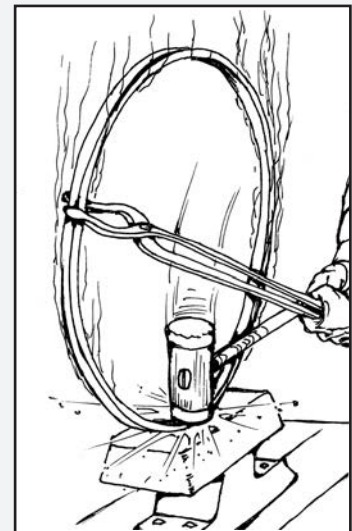
Putting the iron strip back on the wheel is a word picture. It helps us understand how Jesus must hammer out the sin from our lives and fit us back in His plan when we fall away from that plan. Making us fit again in His plan is how He makes us holy. Being put back into God's plan can feel hard and painful to us at times. That is because God is changing us. This change can include how we use our money, how kind we are to people, and how we do our jobs.

It is not easy to fit iron back on the rim of a wheel after it has fallen off. It is not always easy for us to change either. Think about Peter. Peter went everywhere with Jesus. But Peter did not ever think Jesus would say these words to him: " 'I have prayed that you will not lose your faith! Help your brothers be stronger when you come back to me' " (Luke 22:32, ICB). A short time later, Peter turned away from Jesus. Then Peter changed and came back to Jesus. But Peter changed only after he went through a bad experience. Then Peter could move on in a new life. And that new life was with Jesus. But this new life happened only after God "hammered" the weakness out of Peter's life.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① How is being made holy connected with Jesus' teaching: " 'If anyone wants to follow me, he must say "no" to the things he wants. Every day he must be willing even to die on a cross, and he must follow me' " (Luke 9:23, ICB)? What does Jesus mean when He says we must be willing to die on a cross? (Read Galatians 6:14 for a hint.) How does the word picture of "dying on a cross" help explain what it means to become holy? As we see in 1 Corinthians 2:16, how does becoming holy help us to think the same as Jesus?

② How can our bad experiences teach us powerful lessons about the Christian life and what it means to follow the Lord?



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