

The First (and Most Important) Step to Empower Your Ministry



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THE FIRST (AND MOST IMPORTANT) STEP TO EMPOWER YOUR MINISTRY

Overview and Outline

Want to go from surviving to thriving in ministry? We do things well when we do them with the right heart. From there we must understand our true identity as a steward and learn three spiritual priorities for turning brokenness into blessing. We call it the Journey of Empowerment. You will discover the two ingredients that help individuals and institutions stay on track.

1

Getting your heart right to do things well

2

Understanding your true identity as a steward

3

Learning three spiritual priorities for turning brokenness into blessing

4

Discovering two ingredients that help individuals and institutions stay on track

Getting your heart right to do things well

Mark 6:45-52

45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd.

46 After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. **48** He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went

out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them,

49 but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, **50** because they all saw him and were

terrified. Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It

is I. Don’t be afraid.” **51** Then he climbed into the boat with them,

and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, **52** for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.



- **Straining at the oars** - we focus on surviving on our own strength
- **Filled in fear in the storm** - our misplaced trust shows in crisis
- **Wrong mindset about the loaves** - we have scarcity mindset related to provision
- **Hearts were hardened** - what happens when we go at it alone



Getting your heart right to do things well

Mark 6:35-44

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. “This is a remote place,” they said, “and it’s already very late. **36** Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” **37** But he answered, “You give them something to eat.” They said to him, “That would take more than half a year’s wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?” **38** “How many loaves do you have?” he asked. “Go and see.” When they found out, they said, “Five—and two fish.” **39** Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. **40** So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. **41** Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. **42** They all ate and were satisfied, **43** and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. **44** The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.



- **Put to work what you have** - What do you have in your hands?
- **Watch Jesus supply in groups** - He wants us to see that He can take care of each of us.
- **Find satisfaction in Jesus** - He wants us to grasp that abundant life is found in Him.
- **Trust Him to care for everyone** - He wants everyone to thrive, everywhere.

Understanding your true identity as a steward

What was the initial picture of your design or identity?

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.” Psalm 139:13-14



What’s your story? What factors have shaped your identity since your childhood? What are your values?



WE ARE...

LOVED (NOT CONDEMNED)

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.” Jeremiah 31:3

CHOSEN AND SET APART (NOT FORGOTTEN)

“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” 1 Peter 2:9

STEWARDS (NOT OWNERS)

“This, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

NEVER ALONE (NOT ABANDONED)

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.’” Hebrews 13:5

CHILDREN OF GOD (NOT OUTCASTS)

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.” 1 John 3:1

CO-WORKERS (NOT COMPETITORS)

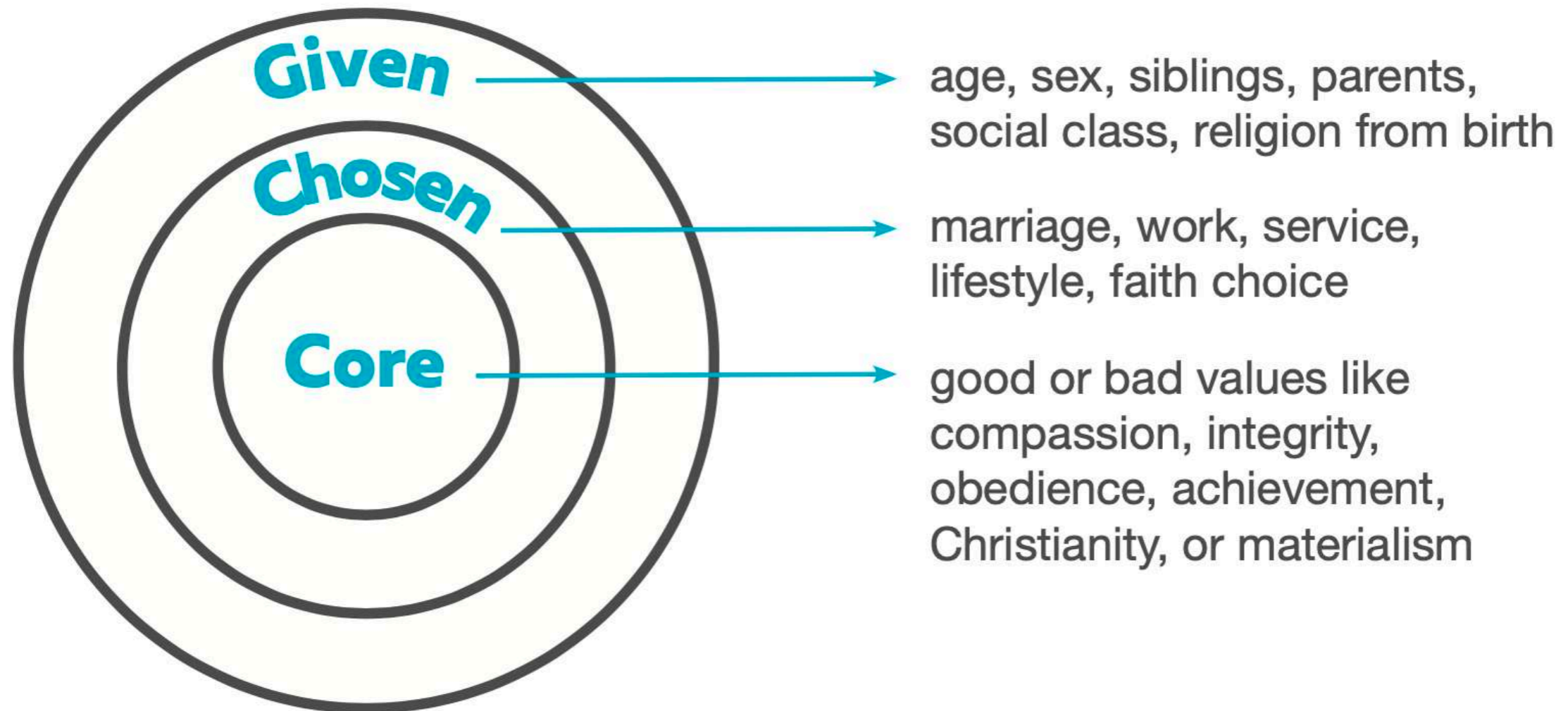
“For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.” 1 Corinthians 3:9

GOD’S HANDIWORK (NOT INSIGNIFICANT)

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:10



Social Identity and Thriving as Faithful Stewards



THE FIRST (AND MOST IMPORTANT) STEP TO EMPOWER YOUR MINISTRY

Learning Three Spiritual Priorities for Turning

Nehemiah 1:1-9

Brokenness into Blessing

The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, **2** Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. **3** They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” **4** When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. **5** Then I said: “Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, **6** let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel.

Three Spiritual Priorities

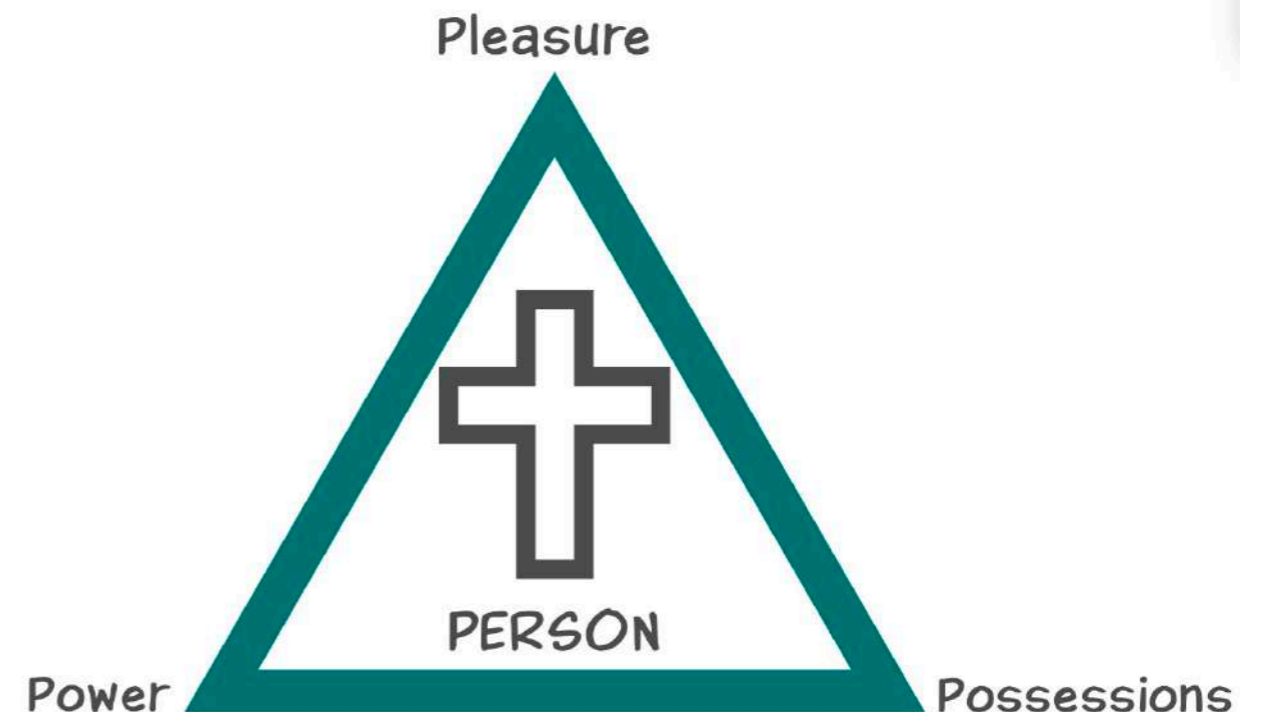
Fasting, Confession, and Prayer

I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. **7** We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. **8** "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, **9** but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

- **Fasting** is setting aside our desires and not just an individual but also a community activity (Esther 4)
- **Confession** is acknowledging our sin, changing directions, and proclaiming our trust in God (Ezra 9, James 4)
- **Prayer** is calling to God to make things right and trusting in his timing (Nehemiah 1)

Learning Three Spiritual Priorities for Turning Brokenness into Blessing

- **Fasting** - What are the things in your life that you need to set aside?
- **Confession** - What are the challenges in your situation and what is your part in changing them?
- **Prayer** - What if you lived for something outside of yourself and bigger than you?



THE FIRST (AND MOST IMPORTANT) STEP TO EMPOWER YOUR MINISTRY

Discovering two ingredients that help individuals and institutions stay on track

Nehemiah 9:5-6

5 And the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah—said: “Stand up and praise the Lord your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. **6** You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you...

Discovering two ingredients that help individuals and institutions stay on track

Nehemiah 9:32-35

32 “Now therefore, our God, the great God, mighty and awesome, who keeps his covenant of love, do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes—the hardship that has come on us, on our kings and leaders, on our priests and prophets, on our ancestors and all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria until today. **33** In all that has happened to us, you have remained righteous; you have acted faithfully, while we acted wickedly. **34** Our kings, our leaders, our priests and our ancestors did not follow your law; they did not pay attention to your commands or the statutes you warned them to keep. **35** Even while they were in their kingdom, enjoying your great goodness to them in the spacious and fertile land you gave them, they did not serve you or turn from their evil ways.

Discovering two ingredients that help individuals and institutions stay on track

Nehemiah 9:36-38

36 “But see, we are slaves today, slaves in the land you gave our ancestors so they could eat its fruit and the other good things it produces. **37** Because of our sins, its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress.

38 “In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it.”

Discovering two ingredients that help individuals and institutions stay on track

- **Standards** - Nehemiah is famous for rebuilding the walls. But he did something bigger. He rebuilt the people with standards because we need accountability.
- **Seal** - The groups among God's people all affixed a seal to the binding agreement. They wanted to help each other stay on track.



What is the First (and Most Important) Step to Empower Your Ministry

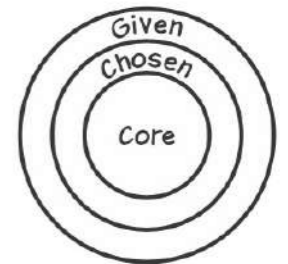
Take the Journey of Empowerment!

1 Getting your heart right to do things well

- Put to work what you have
- Watch Jesus supply
- Trust Him to care for us all

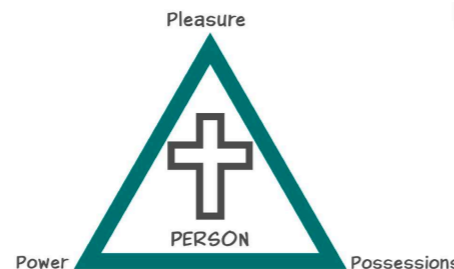
2 Understanding your true identity as a steward

- Living out our true identity as stewards
- Social Identity



3 Learning three spiritual priorities for turning brokenness into blessing

- Fasting
- Confession
- Prayer



4 Discovering two ingredients that help individuals and institutions stay on track

- Standards
- Seal

Discussion: Want to Go from Surviving to Thriving?

Take the Journey of Empowerment!

1

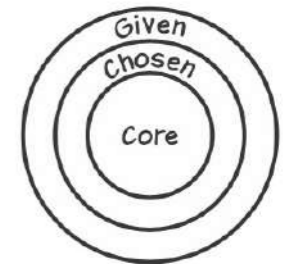
Getting your heart right to do things well

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Understanding your true identity as a steward

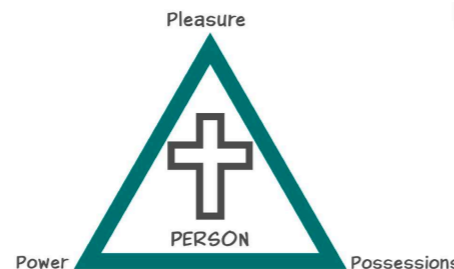
- Living out our true identity as stewards
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3

Learning three spiritual priorities for turning brokenness into blessing

- Fasting
- Confession
- Prayer



4

Discovering two ingredients that help individuals and institutions stay on track

- Standards
- Seal

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and (JOE) Journey of
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