

Sermon Title: **My Stewardship Story (Stewardship Campaign 1)**

Bible: Luke 11:42, 21:1-4

Where & When: Sunday Worship at Gilroy UMC on October 7th, 2018

Audience: about 30 English Speaking Church Members

Opening Prayer

Let us pray! Gracious God, our church is already awesome as you are.

I want to be an awesome pastor like our church.

I stand in front of you. Please be with me and cover us with your love and grace.

In Jesus' name. Amen!

1. Two Sermons for Stewardship Campaign

Today's sermon is prepared for our Stewardship Campaign. I plan to give two messages: the first one is about my own stewardship story, and the second one is about Healthy Church Finance, which will be on the 2nd Sunday of November.

2. Hesitations

I had a lot of hesitation when I prepared today's sermon. Maybe I am too young.

Maybe I am still immature. Maybe it is too early. Maybe it is too controversial.

Maybe it is too sensitive. Maybe it can be wrong. Maybe it can be misunderstood.

Maybe, I am too Korean. However, as you are an awesome church, I really want to

be an awesome pastor, as soon as possible. Actually, I want to be an awesome

pastor right now. That's why I stand here in front of you and God. As I do not ignore the justice and love of God, I do not want to neglect the subject of offering.

Thankfully, my wife supports and understands me in sharing our stewardship story.

I pray that today's message can be two small copper coins.

3. Healthy Life & Spiritual Practice

For a healthy life, I am going to the gym. Because I am a normal person, to be healthy, I need to work out! My goal is exercising three times a week: 5 minutes stretching out, 30 minutes cycling, 10 minutes weight training, another 30 minutes of cardio exercise, closing with 5 minutes of stretching out. I am also careful about what I am eating. I try to avoid sodium and sugar in my diet.

For my own spiritual practice, one thing that I do is to give offering.

4. My Goal: Giving the First 10%, Sunday Worship Offering, and Relief

Offering

As I set up goals of exercise, I make my own goals for offering. Because I grew up in Korean Churches, my own offering goals may sound strange, strict, or unrealistic. But I have these goals for my offering: giving the first 10%, Sunday Offering, and Relief Offering.

Giving the **First 10%** means taking out 10% of my income and giving it as a tithe first, before spending any money. As 30 minutes of exercise influences the whole of my life, giving 10% will make my spiritual life healthier. Taking out 10% first, and not last, is also my goal. Just like it is hard to go to the gym regularly, it is difficult to take out 10% first.

Sunday Worship Offering means to me buying one good meal for God or watching a movie together with God. I want to pay for God, at least once a week. In my own calculation, one good meal or trip to the movies costs \$20.

To me, **Relief Offering** is giving offering for those who are in need. One of my favorite pastors practices this as giving one day's income. His intention is spending one day with those who need help financially.

5. My Action: Not Always, Almost, Not Yet

Do I achieve these goals? (Nope). Then, should I give up my goals? I do not want to give up. I want to challenge myself every day, because this my spiritual practice!

Do I give the "first 10%" all the time? My answer is "**Not Always.**" Tithing is always challenging. When I am sick, I do not work out, but I take a rest. Likewise, when I was in financial trouble, I did not give 10%. When I was in seminary, the last year before graduation was terrible. I could not afford tuition, rent, or living expenses. We - my wife and I - were thinking about giving up the seminary and

going back to Korea. So I did not make my tithing goals. Did I feel guilty? Should I feel sorry? At that time, I prayed “God, giving the first 10% is on my bucket list.” I have completed this bucket list item whenever there is an opportunity.

How about “Sunday Worship Offering”? I can say that I **almost** always give Sunday worship offering, because I like to eat together with God, and because I really like to watch movies with God. Sometimes, what I have given was not \$20, but \$5 or \$1. As I enjoy this precious worship time with God and the faith family, I want to contribute from what I have.

How about “Relief Offering”? My response is “**Not Yet.**” Honestly speaking, giving one day’s income every month is not joyful yet. For now, I change this goal to--not one day--but one meal, which is giving \$20, whenever it is needed. For example, when there is fundraising for a disaster, the homeless, or a children’s hospital, I will try to give \$20.

6. Right Weight for Dumbbells & Right Amount of Offering

When I go to the gym, I do not lift too heavy or too light dumbbells. If I lift the too heavy one, it will hurt me. If I lift the too light one, it will not be exercise. I look for the proper weight dumbbells for me. When lifting the right weight 8 to 12 times a set, I can feel the challenge for my muscles. Then I am accomplishing

exercise with these dumbbells. Likewise, I want to exercise giving as my own spiritual practice. For my own benefit, I search out my own right amount of offering. Because I want to build more muscles of generosity for my own soul, I set up the goals and exercise.

7. Shall We?

Even though I exercise, I can be sick. Working out does not guarantee the absolute perfect healthy life. And there are many other ways to be healthy: balanced diet, sleeping well, having true friends, reading books, etc. Likewise, there are many ways of spiritual practice. Giving is just one of many. I just choose giving as one of my own spiritual practices, because I need money and because I love money. Going to the gym by myself is sometimes not that fun. It would be better to have gym friends. Likewise, having faith friends for spiritual practice is more joyful. Thankfully, I have my wife for working out and for our own spiritual practice. And I want to have more faith friends or faith family. Shall we work out? Shall we give as our own spiritual practice?

Closing Prayer

Generous God, you are the source of everything. Thank you so much for your generosity! As you are generous, please guide us to be generous. In Jesus' name, Amen.