

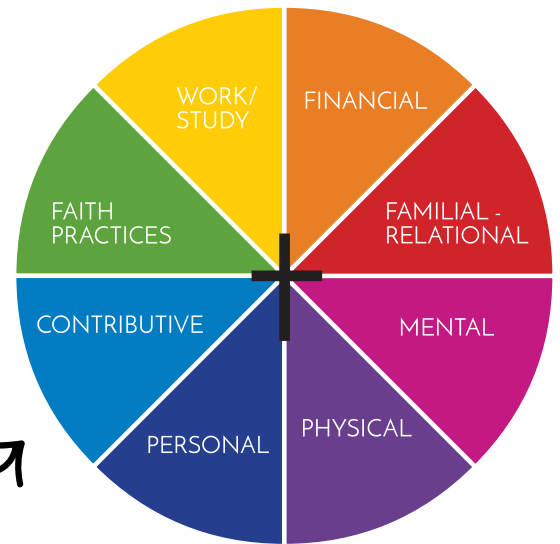
Stewardship

THE WHOLE OF LIFE

Because the whole of our lives are grounded in and shaped by our relationship with Christ, it follows that in thinking about our lives we should take a wholistic approach.

The "Life Wheel"

Consider the following eight dimensions of our lives:



Faith Practices:

For a Christian worship, prayer, study, and meditation on God's Word, are an integral part of life. Christ joins himself to us through these practices, giving us grace and strength to follow and serve him in all we do.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. - Colossians 3:16

- I devote time to personal prayer and to reading and studying the Bible.
- I am committed to a regular Sunday worship pattern.
- I value receiving the Lord's Supper regularly.
- I strive to meet with other Christians to share and grow in faith.
- I talk with other people about my faith.

Financial:

The Christian view of money is that all money is God's money and God gives us the responsibility to manage this money as stewards.

You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth - Deuteronomy 8:17-18

- I manage my finances from a spiritual perspective.
- I regard what I have as on loan from God and keep his purposes in mind in my saving, spending and financial planning.
- I give to God the firstfruits of what I receive.
- I am conscious of the lures of materialism and seek to guard my heart against them.

Familial - Relational:

God is a God of relationship. Our relationships with others are central to our experience and enjoyment of life. It is through our relationships that God blesses us, instructs us, and guides us. Our families are our primary relational unit, with parents and children given special responsibilities toward each other.

No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. - 1 John 4:12

- My relationships with others are central to my life.
- I recognise the calling and responsibilities I have to love, care for and nurture those around me.
- I regard the calling of mother/father, wife/husband, and daughter/son as sacred and give these vocational roles pride of place in my use of my time and resources.
- I am committed to growing in spiritual community with others.

Mental:

Learning and reasoning is praise of God! Our mental capacities of reasoning and imagination are wonderful gifts from him that we are called to develop, exercise, and use to serve others and contribute to the wellbeing the world. From a spiritual point of view, God desires to renew our minds and fills us with the knowledge of his will and ways.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. - Romans 12:2

- I am committed to growing and learning, including in knowledge of God's Word.
- I strive to fill my mind with things that are good, helpful, and edifying.
- I strive to use my mental capacities to help and serve others.

Work/Study:

God intended us to work and for our work to be productive and joy-giving. In our work and study, we are God's "masks" in the world, maintaining order in and preserving his creation.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. – Colossians 3:23-24

- I see my work and study as a means of doing God's work in the world.
- My work aims and goals are subject to my spiritual priorities.

Contributive:

God has given us each unique gifts and talents to use in service of others, whether in the community, in the church or in both. He has also given us our time and financial resources to manage carefully for the good of others. Use of our God-given resources in service of others is a source of great blessing both to us and to them.

In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' – Acts 20:35

- I look to engage in acts of service and justice to make God's world a better place.
- I give portions of my time and money to help those in need.
- I do things to help protect the environment.
- I look for ways to use and develop the talents and gifts that God has given me.
- I seek to actively contribute to the ministry of my congregation.

Physical:

The Bible does not teach of a spiritual-physical divide. Spirituality is deeply physical, and we are called as people of the Spirit to take good care of our bodies – as well as to enjoy and celebrate them!

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body. – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

- I take good care of myself physically, both by what I do and what I don't do.
- I avoid abusing my body through overwork, eating habits or substance abuse.
- I recognise that my physical choices have spiritual dimensions and consequences.

Personal:

God has given us a wonderful world to enjoy! We praise God through fun and laughter as much as through work and learning. God desires for us to develop interests and hobbies, to re-create, and to take pleasure in the delights of his creation.

So I commend the enjoyment of life, because nothing is better for a man under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. – Ecclesiastes 8:15

- I make and take time for adequate rest and leisure.
- I cultivate personal interests and hobbies.
- I make and take time to "smell the flowers" – to enjoy the wonders of God's creation.

For reflection...



"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you." – Romans 12:1,2