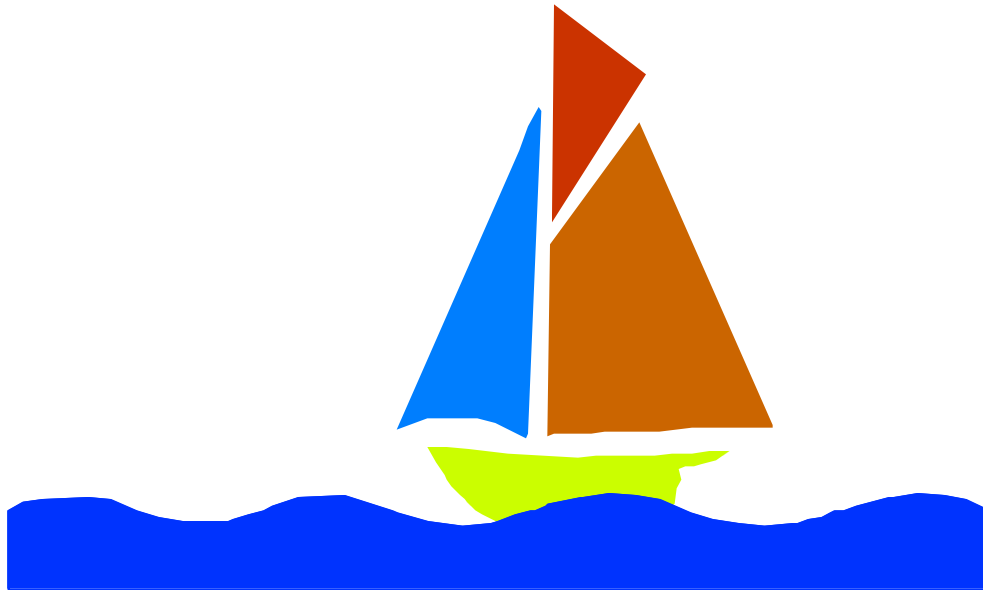


## StewardLife LESSON 15



### STORY:

I'll never forget the sight of standing high up on Point Loma near San Diego looking down on the blue water of the harbor. Hundreds of sailboats of all colors were in the bay, sails billowing in the brisk mid-morning sea breeze. The steady flow of air from sea to land made mid-morning an ideal sailing time. But just after sunrise and again about sunset, an uncanny calm settles over the bay and the sailboats come in to port. Without wind to fill the sails, there's no sailing.

As Christians, we're like sailboats. At our baptism we were each fitted with a sail—a receptor of spiritual power—and wind power at that! Scripture describes the Holy Spirit as a “rushing mighty wind” and uses other air and wind metaphors for the Holy Spirit and his work.

But we can't get the power for our spiritual sails by holding them up in the wind. Our spiritual sails are only filled when they catch God's Word or are powered by the Lord's Supper. Then our spiritual sails billow with the fresh breezes of God's Spirit and we have the power to sail forth into everyday life.

### STORY:

Beverly slipped into the sparkling pool under a blazing sun in the hotel courtyard. She had looked forward to this workout ever since she arrived in Albuquerque. The business meetings she was attending brought on a fair share of anxiety. The vigorous swim should take away some of the stress.

A strong swimmer, Beverly struck out across the length of the pool with a vigorous stroke. One length...two lengths...three lengths. What seemed to be wrong? She was getting dizzy and it was hard to breathe. Beverly couldn't figure it out. She periodically swam a mile a day at home in New Orleans. She certainly wasn't out of shape. She pressed on...four lengths...five lengths...six lengths. Now the exhaustion was affecting her stroke. Her arms felt like lead coming out of the water. She was splashing and thrashing instead of swimming.

The next thing she knew, she was laying on her back on the side of the pool with an oxygen mask over her face. She had fainted, the lifeguard informed her. Because of her wild strokes, the lifeguard had been watching closely, and when she passed out, he pulled her immediately from the water.

"Where are you from?" the lifeguard asked.

"New Orleans," Beverly replied.

"That's the problem," he said. "Albuquerque is 5,000 feet above sea level. The air is thin up here." It happens quite often that people don't realize it until they try some serious aerobic exercise. Then they discover the thin air.

"You'll be OK after this shot of oxygen. But be careful with your swimming until you get used to the rarified atmosphere here."

Beverly agreed that she would.

## INSIGHT OUT:

Think about ways your spiritual sails can be filled with the "Spirit's breezes." Where can you catch that breeze? How can you make sure your sails stay full?

How are you struggling in a rarified atmosphere of the Spirit? How can you get the "extra shot of oxygen" needed to get your StewardLife back on track?

## EXERCISE:

Watch for a one way sign today. Such a sign is an annoyance for many drivers because it blocks a shorter route to the destination. However, traffic engineers say it improves traffic flow.

See your first one way sign today with spiritual eyes. Recall that "There is no other name given...by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Early Christians were called "followers of the Way" (Acts 9:2; 24:14).

Thank God that by His grace you live your StewardLife traveling on that one way leading to heaven. Resolve to help relatives, co-workers and friends join you on that road.

## EXERCISE:

"A gas station on every corner," lament some people in expanding communities. Other communities brag: "We've got more churches than gas stations."

As you travel this week, count gas stations. What do you think is the ratio in your town, city or neighborhood of churches to gas stations?

Consider how churches and gas stations are alike. The church fuels us by feeding us on the Word, the Sacrament and the spiritual fruit of others in fellowship. Without that regular contact, our trips out into the world can drain us of all spiritual energy.

Let every gas station you see this week remind you to refuel spiritually at your next opportunity. You'll be surprised how much energy you'll have for your next week's StewardLife journey.

This site is maintained through the Board for Congregational Services,  
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