

## StewardLife LESSON 13

### STORY:

"Grandma!"

"What, dear?"

"This salad dressing tastes awful!"

Jessica was visiting her grandmother for the weekend. She decided to surprise grandmother with a nice salad and dressing for lunch.

She knew that grandmother liked to make a special Italian dressing. Jessica had found the recipe in grandmother's recipe box and secretly prepared it.

"I'm so disappointed, grandma. I really wanted to surprise you."

"Well, let's see if we can figure out what went wrong," said grandmother sympathetically. "Let's go over the recipe ingredient by ingredient."

Grandmother read off each ingredient and Jessica checked the countertop where she still had all the ingredients lined up. When they got to the garlic, Jessica let out a little shriek.

"Grandma, I put in one tablespoon of garlic powder instead of one teaspoon. No wonder it tastes so awful!"

They both laughed about Jessica's mistake.

## STORY:

Terry hurried to the lake with his ice skates over his shoulder. When he got there, six other guys were already sitting on the big fallen tree lacing up their skates.

The latest below-zero weather had finally made the ice thick enough to be safe. The city raised a green flag on the park flagpole that afternoon, signaling that the lake was open for skating. All the kids saw it on the way home from school and the word spread fast.

Terry shivered as he pulled off his boots, partly because of the cold and partly due to his excitement. He had taken his skates to a shop last week to have them sharpened, just to be ready for this special day.

"There! All ready!" Terry said to himself. Walking on tiptoe to the edge of the lake, he made a little leap over the rough ice at the edge and onto the smooth, glassy surface where four other boys were already working off their early-winter wobbles.

But try as he might, Terry couldn't get his skates to glide. A push and stroke to the right . . . nothing! A push and stroke to the left . . . nothing! Had the shop sharpened his skates wrong?

"Hey, what's wrong with this ice?" called Ralph from the other side of the old wooden boat dock.

"Yeah. I can't get going at all," echoed Paul.

"Hey boys!" came a familiar voice. "It's too cold to skate." It was Mr. Katzmann, who owned the sport shop. "I saw you guys heading down here after school and knew just what would happen. Since we haven't had this cold a winter in some time, I figured you never experienced ice that's too cold to skate on."

"Whaddya mean too cold?" called Paul, tip-toeing across the ice to the bank.

"Well, when you skate on ice, you actually are gliding on a thin layer of water that forms between your runner and the ice. That's what makes skating so smooth and fast. But when the ice is very cold, that layer of water can't form. It's like trying to skate on a dry surface, like a vinyl floor. No way. You need that layer of water to make things go smoothly."

"What can we do?" asked Terry.

"Nothing," replied Mr. Katzmann. "You'll just have to wait for the temperature to rise closer to 32 degrees. Sorry, boys."

Whoever could have imagined that it could be too cold to skate?

As more kids swarmed to the lake, Terry and his friends passed on the new information to everyone. But, as usual, no one believed them—until, that is, they got out on the ice.

The kids learned that just because the green flag was flying didn't always mean the conditions were right for going out on the ice.

## INSIGHT OUT:

Sometimes you have put together all the ingredients for a wonderful evening, or a great vacation, or a sure investment. Then, somehow, things go horribly wrong.

Sometimes you have the green light, but conditions are not right to move out. Things that look right may not be right.

Sometimes people will encourage you to try something new, but then place so many barriers to success in your way that you become frustrated. Even in the church there can be conditions that hamper your excitement in using your gifts to serve the Lord.

All of the above are a result of sin. Errors in following instructions, errors in judgement, bad timing in investments or relationships—nothing is a sure thing on this side of heaven. But God helps you manage even the worst of times.

Have you ever heard someone say: "All things work for good to those who love God"? Look closely at the right wording: "In all things God works for the good of those who love him" (Romans 8:28). See the difference? Even your poor decisions can be made good in the blood of Jesus Christ. Making things right is an intentional work of God—not your work, or by chance. That's good news for your StewardLife.

## EXERCISE:

As you travel this week, pay particular attention to traffic lights. They tell you when to stop, when to go, and when change is about to occur. Imagine the confusion if no one obeyed the signals. Recent statistics tell us about that: more people are running red lights than ever before. Is it inattention, defiance of the law or selfishness (I deserve to go, you don't)?

Whatever, God gives us traffic signals for managing life. "Whenever God closes a door, He opens a window," people say. After the proper timing cycle is complete, every red light becomes green. When you look at your life through spiritual eyes, you can see

God's signals. Sometimes He guides you to go. Sometimes He brakes you to a stop. And it is very important to be aware of the caution--when He is about to bring change into your life.

An exercise to help you be proactive in managing life is to ask periodically, "What does God want me to start doing (green light)?" What does God want me to stop doing (red light)? What does God want me to change (yellow light)?

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