

Put in the big rocks first

In "First Things First," Stephen Covey tells a story that one of his associates heard at a seminar. The seminar presenter pulled out a wide-mouth gallon jar and placed it next to a pile of fist-sized rocks. After filling the jar to the top with **rocks**, he asked, "*Is the jar full?*"

The group replied, "Yes."

He then got some gravel from under the table and added it to the jar. The speaker jiggled the jar until the **gravel** filled the spaces between the rocks. Again, he asked, "*Is the jar full?*"

This time, the group replied, "*Probably not.*"

The speaker then added some **sand** and asked, "*Is the jar full?*"

"*No!*" shouted the group.

Finally, the speaker filled the jar to the brim with **water** and asked the group the point of this illustration.

Someone replied that you could always fit more things into your life if "*you really work at it.*"

"*No,*" countered the speaker. The point is, if you don't put the big rocks in first, ". . . *would you ever have gotten any of them in?*"

As you start the New Year, think of the "big rocks" in your life as the things you can do to make this a healthier and happier year for yourself and others.

Some of us make New Year's resolutions. What will they be this year?

Some big rocks might be:

exercising more often;

eating additional calcium foods;

trying some new vegetables;

getting more sleep;

spending added time with family and friends;

doing volunteer work in your community;

reading inspirational literature.

As you make decisions during the moments, days and months of the year ahead, ask: "*Is this a big rock?*"

Quick Quiz

Which activity looks like a big rock to you?

Watching a rerun of a less-than-favorite TV show **OR** taking a walk with a friend or family member.

Checking your e-mail every few minutes **OR** writing a letter of praise/thanks to a co-worker or friend.

Giving your thumb a workout with the TV remote control **OR** going for a walk around the block.

Spending your time "crawling the Sunshine Plaza" **OR**

Doing that "one more thing" on a night you're extremely tired **OR** going to bed and getting a good night's sleep.

As you make choices this year, say "yes" to your "big rocks" first. Don't feel you need to explain each "no" when the smaller gravel and sand try to fill your time. "No" can be a complete sentence!

As Christians our priority for life should be one. Listen to the call Jesus makes on those who want to follow him. Luke 9:23 Then he said to them all: "***If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.***"

Or Paul puts a different way:-

2 Corinthians 5:14 ***For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.***

How will you keep doing this?

What will it look like?

1. Yourself and God

Read: **Philippians 2:12-14**

Our mission statement:- MAKE, MATURE and MOTIVATE D's of CHRIST.

Here we are talking about the Mature part of our mission statement. Notice that these verses say that working out your salvation is not just you alone working but also God working.

As much as we are responsible for each other you are also responsible for yourself.

The means of grace God has provided to help us work out our salvation is His Word.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,
17so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Beaches have been dangerous the last few days.

Probably many rescues. I can imagine for some ppl when they get rescued they cling to the lifesaver like there life depends on it.

Well because it does.

We must cling on to the Bible like a kid who can't swim but somehow finds a lifesaver in the middle of the ocean.

We must cling to God's Word like our lives depend upon. Jesus said man does not live on bread alone but by every Word that comes from God.

Take time to plan how it is going to happen. If you don't plan it it won't happen. Work out your daily personal Bible reading and prayer. The time, place, content.

HUSBANDS – what does it means to be a husband?

Ephesians 5 says you are to present her godly by the Word.

FATHERS – Ephesians 6:4-5 says “Do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

It is clear from these verses what your role is as a Father. Teach your kids about JESUS.

Again take time to plan how you will do this.

2. Yourself and God's people

Read: Hebrews 10:24-25

By becoming a Christian, I belong to God and I belong to my brothers and sisters. It is not that I belong to God and then make a decision to join a local church. My being in Christ means being in Christ with those others who are in Christ.

If the church is the body of Christ then we should not live as disembodied members.

The main ways this is expressed at Lakeshore is by our **Sunday meeting and in Growth Groups.**

The Eldership is trying not to put on an extra regular commitments but maximising the time you are already out.

This paragraph from a church website captures what is our aim:-

“Our focus as a church is on worship and teaching. Much else goes on, but that is the heart of our life. We want to develop a hunger and thirst for the living God. For this reason, we try not to be a “full service church,” with something for everyone. We try to keep church life simple and to keep church activities to a minimum; we assume that godly homes are more likely to be built if people are at home most nights rather than run ragged by various church functions.”

Often the view of life is that we stand on our own heroically juggling various responsibilities; family, friendship, job, leisure, chores, decisions, money. You could other social responsibilities residents groups, school committees.

From time to time the pressures overwhelm us and we drop one or more of the balls. All too often church becomes one of the balls. We juggle our responsibilities for church just as we juggle our responsibilities for work or leisure.

An alternative model is to view our various activities and responsibilities as spokes of a wheel. At the centre or hub of life is not me as an individual, but as members of the Christian community. Church is not another ball for me to juggle, but that which defines who I am and gives Christlike shape to my life.

This does not mean I spend ALL our time with church people but our time doing others things is shaped by our commitment to church. There must be time for what is our last point this morning.

3. Yourself and those who don't yet know God

Read: Matthew 22 36"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38This is the first and greatest commandment. 39And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' 40All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 28:18-20

This is the MAKE part of our mission statement.

Unlike me you don't have to go out of your way to have contact with non-Christians. It is more than you may need to work on building relationships with them and making your conversation peppered with God talk and the Gospel.

As we come to that **time of the year where things slow down** (after Christmas day) it is a good time to stop and reflect on how you can best use your time. The church activities are less and work can be slower. Many of the activities or programmes of churches can be a distraction from the central task of making Jesus known. They can absorb and pre-occupy us, and we become so embroiled in church activity that we're experts in religious duty. Which means that we:

- lament how busy we are
- realise how out of touch with non-Christians we are

It's incredibly liberating to be able to look at your diary, and to see how relatively uncluttered it is, and therefore how much time there is available for getting on with the real business. It re-introduces us to spontaneity! The ability to do things on the spur of the moment for the sake of the gospel.

Why not **invite some friends over** just to spend some 'slow' time with them or head down to the beach together. Take some time with others to 'smell the roses.' It can take a lot of time talking about the cricket and the trivial things of life before you can get to the deeper real issues of life.

This would be a good habit to make part of your lifestyle at the beginning of the year and continue. The challenge will be to not let other things crowd this out and stop you from spending time with people.

Jesus spent most of his time with people. The people he most associated with in his ministry, and the people on whom he staked his reputation were the '**unchurched**' of 1st century Jewish society. Perhaps the world at large would be more willing to listen to our message if we actually did this as well?

Something I am going to keep before you all year.
Hear from people and what opportunities they have had.

What will be your New's Year resolutions?

Will they have to do with the 'big rocks'?

Will you find your life with water, sand, or gravel like activities and leave out the big ones?