

Developing Giving Strategies

One of the greatest spiritual mistakes that Christians make today is presuming that what they have belongs solely to them. Misunderstanding that all we have comes from God alone causes us to miss the purpose of "God Given" time, talents and treasures. The resources we have today, especially the financial resources, were given to us, not only to provide for our needs, but for the needs of others. In Acts 20:35, Paul reminds us what Jesus thought about giving, "remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The heartbeat of God is for us to invest the time, talents and treasures that He has given us in His Kingdom work.

In fact, it's a sad commentary, that four out of ten church attenders give nothing, and two or three out of ten give next to nothing. Christians today are willing to trust the God of this universe with their eternity, however those same Christians will not trust Him with their pocketbooks. For Christians, giving should be a vivid reminder that our life is not about ourselves, but in fact, it's all about God. We are not the point! He is the point! He does not exist for us, but we exist for Him. Randy Alcorn said it best when he pinned the following; "God's money has a higher purpose than my affluence. Giving is a joyful surrender to a greater Person and a greater agenda. Giving affirms Christ's lordship. It dethrones me and exalts Him. It breaks the chains of Mammon that would enslave me and transfers my center of gravity to heaven. As long as I still have something, I believe I own it. But when I give it away, I relinquish the control, power, and prestige that come with wealth. At the moment of release, the light turns on. The magic spell is broken. My mind clears and I recognize God as owner, myself as servant, and other people as intended beneficiaries of what God has entrusted to me."

Giving doesn't strip you of your vested interest; rather, it shifts your vested interest from earth to heaven---from self to God.

Many a Christian who want to excuse their disobedience from "tithing" will usually say something like this, "tithing is an Old Testament tradition, but the New Testament doesn't require it." This is far from the truth because Jesus addressed many of the false teachings such as that in the New Testament. Jesus said in Matthew 23:23 that tithing is very important, however we can't believe that just because we do tithe, it's OK to not obey the other commands of God. God wants us to be obedient children and there are consequences if we

choose not to be obedient. Therefore, I want to share with you eleven guidelines that should govern giving in your life:

1. **Give** - 2 Corinthians 9:7 - Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give.
2. **Give Generously** - Mark 14:3-9 - The tithe is only a starting place.
3. **Give Regularly** - 1 Corinthians 16:2 - "On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income." Be systematic about your giving.
4. **Give Deliberately** - Thought and determination should be applied in our giving.
5. **Give Voluntarily** - 2 Corinthians 9:7 - Be a willing and freewill giver.
6. **Give Sacrificially** - 2 Corinthians 8:2-3 - Giving is not a luxury of the rich, but it's a privilege of the poor. There are three levels of giving and they are; less than our ability, according to our ability, and beyond our ability.
7. **Give Excellently** - 2 Corinthians 8:7 - "See that you also excel in this grace of giving."
8. **Give Cheerfully** - 2 Corinthians 9:7 - God delights in the believer who takes delight in giving.
9. **Give Worshipfully** - Acts 10:1-4 Cornelius worshiped God through his giving. Giving should be our response to the Grace given to us by God.
10. **Give Proportionately** - Acts 11:29, 1 Corinthians 16:2 - Proportionately means that at least 10% of whatever you make should be given back to God. Some made more than others, but proportionately meant that everybody was giving their share.
11. **Give Quietly** - Matthew 6:4 - Giving is between God and you and being boastful or loud about your giving, is between you and others. Giving is spiritual, not just material.

Do you want to know more about honoring God in giving? We can help you develop an eternal investment strategy that will honor God and build His Kingdom. Please contact the FBCW Stewardship Ministry office today at 678-494-2681 for more information about meeting with a financial counselor and/or attending training sessions such as Crown Ministries or Financial Fitness & Freedom.