

Stewardship and Giving Strategies for 2013

By Doug Clay



Did you know that the Bible teaches us that the way we handle our money determines how much God can bless us?

Actually, Christ said it—probably because He knew that the way in which we handle our money is evidence of our heart and priorities.

Additionally, Scripture teaches that if we don't handle our money well, God cannot trust us with true spiritual blessings! *"So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?" Luke 16:11 (NIV).*

TRUE RICHES = SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

So, in other words, our personal responsibility with worldly wealth (money) determines how much of God's blessings (true riches) He can give us.

With that understanding, let's consider some of the stewardship strategies that the Bible recommends.

THE VALUE OF BUDGETING

The Bible supports the value of budgeting to plan your spending! Proverbs teaches us to *"Know the state of your flocks, and put your heart into caring for your herds" (Prov. 27:23, NLT).*

Interestingly, when Solomon wrote this, everybody had their assets tied up in flocks. Today, Solomon might say something like, "Know where your assets are, and know how you're spending your money."

Scripture also reminds us to budget carefully. *"Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity" (Prov. 21:5, NLT).*

You know, financial freedom doesn't have to do with how much you make but rather, how much you are spending! *"The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get" (Prov. 21:20, NLT).*

It's certainly important to know how much you make, but it's critical to watch closely how much you spend.

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THE VALUE OF SAVING

Scripture also teaches the importance of saving. Specifically, saving for the future: *“The wise have wealth and luxury, but fools spend whatever they get” (Prov. 21:20, NLT).*

Let me say that again, the Bible says it’s wise to save. *“Easy come, easy go, but steady diligence pays off” (Prov. 13:11, MSG).*

I would strongly encourage you to check out and consider the various options offered by Assemblies of God Financial Solutions (AGFS). They are proven to be extremely effective in providing personalized investment services for retirement, investments, planned giving and life insurance. I personally am very satisfied with the service and results that I have received from AGFS.

Not only is savings biblical, but its also practical! I was taught at an early age that when “your outgo exceeds your income, your upkeep will be your downfall.”

THE VALUE OF GIVING

In talking about giving, I’m not referring to tithing, after all, the tithe belongs to the Lord. *“One-tenth of the produce of the land, whether grain from the fields or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord and must be set apart to him as holy” (Lev. 27:30, NLT).*

I want to encourage you to be a generous giver with the remaining 90% that the Lord privileges you to manage.

When you think about it, the true test of stewardship is NOT so much about what our money is doing for us, but rather, what our money is doing to us!

Giving people are generally happier people—stingy people are unhappy! Think about it...you know what the root word for miserable is? MISER!

When I give, I recognize that God owns it all. *“The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it” (Ps. 24:1, NIV)* and that through my giving, God will take care of me.

Consider these two verses:

“The world of the generous gets larger and larger; the world of the stingy gets smaller and smaller” (Prov. 11:24, MSG).

“But my God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19, KJV).

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As I reflect on this, I realize:

- I give because I want the blessing of God in my life! God can't bless what we don't give him!
- I give to missions, ministries, and special Kingdom causes/appeals because I want to have something in heaven waiting for me.
- What I spend in this life will eventually be gone, but when I give to Kingdom causes...it will be waiting for me! *"Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal" (Matt. 6:20, NLT).*
- I want to be emotionally healthy! I want to be content. *"Enjoy what you have rather than desiring what you don't have. Just dreaming about nice things is meaningless—like chasing the wind" (Ecc. 6:9, NLT).*

Contentment is so important in life and ministry. Thankfully, Paul reminds us that contentment is learned behavior!

Managing our money is critical. Thankfully there is clear scriptural guidance and resources, like those that AGFS provide, to help us be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

Remember this as you start 2013: One way to protect yourself from any unnecessary stress, frustration, anxiety and depression is to manage your money biblically!

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