

STRATEGIC GIVING

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Giving opens the door to one of the most powerful testimonies a Christian can have. It demonstrates obedience to God's commands, acknowledges His ownership of everything, allows us to participate in His work while here on earth, and offers the promise of future eternal rewards. Giving can be an investment in eternity. Making decisions about where to give holds just as much importance as deciding where to invest. Don't simply rely on your historical giving patterns. Pray about your giving and be alert to new opportunities and challenges presented by God.

"We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

Winston Churchill

"Let each one do just as he has purposed in his heart; not grudgingly or under compulsion; for God loves a cheerful giver."

II CORINTHIANS 9:7

STRATEGIC GIVING: WHY, HOW AND WHERE

"If I could boil down everything I have learned into one sentence or thought, it would be this: Generosity and financial freedom are inextricably linked. If you want to replace fear, guilt and frustration with freedom, confidence and joy, you have to hold your treasures—your money, your possessions, your time and talents—with an open hand." Ron Blue, *Generous Living*

5 QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is your motivation for giving?

- Generous and cheerful spirit II CORINTHIANS 9:6-8
- Love for God and others I CORINTHIANS 13:3
- Recognition MATTHEW 6:3

READ: MATTHEW 7:7-8

2. Are you regularly spending time with God as you make your giving decisions?

READ: PROVERBS 3:9-10

3. Do you give regularly and from the first of your provision?

READ: DEUTERONOMY 16:17

4. Does your giving correspond to the blessings the Lord has given you?

READ: LUKE 21:1-4

5. Is your giving sacrificial?

5 BIBLICAL REASONS FOR GIVING

1. Giving is a tangible way to acknowledge the ultimate ownership and provision of a sovereign God in our lives I CORINTHIANS 4:7,
I CORINTHIANS 10:26
2. Giving is commanded by God and enables believers to display honor and obedience PROVERBS 3:9-10, LUKE 6:38,
I CORINTHIANS 16
3. Giving helps prioritize life-issues and breaks the hold of money on our lives LUKE 16:11-13,
I TIMOTHY 6:18-19
4. Giving tangibly meets the needs of others DEUTERONOMY 15:10-11, II
CORINTHIANS 9:12-14
5. Giving can lead to personal rewards PROVERBS 22:9, II CORINTHIANS 9:8,
PHILIPPIANS 4: 17

STRATEGIC GIVING: WHY, HOW AND WHERE

Continued

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE

There is no set formula for Biblical giving, but decisions can be made on three different levels.

1. The "Should Give" level represents the tithe that is spoken of in the Old Testament as 10%, but in the New Testament as proportional to the Lord's blessings (LEVITICUS 27:30, DEUTERONOMY 14:23, II CORINTHIANS 8:12, II CORINTHIANS 9:6-7).
2. The "Could Give" level pertains to sacrificial giving on top of the tithe. The Lord commends this type of giving as a symbol of our trust in His provision. Remember the poor widow in MARK 12:43-44? She generously gave all she had and was consequently rewarded with the Lord's favor.
3. The "Would Give" level stretches your faith even further by causing you to respond to the Lord and commit resources that only He can provide, sometimes unexpectedly.

BIBLICAL DIRECTIONS FOR WHERE TO GIVE

There are unlimited opportunities to give of your money, time and talents. Be strategic and prayerful in your decisions, evaluating each opportunity before the Lord and not reacting to emotional appeals or past giving history.

- Give to your local church or fellowship GALATIANS 6:6
- Give to organizations whose efforts are MATTHEW 28:18-20
fulfilling the Great Commission
- Give to individuals in need I JOHN 3: 17

DEVELOPING MY GIVING STRATEGY

Key decisions in developing your strategy:

- How much of your income do you plan to give in the current year?
- Where is the Lord leading you to give?
- Are there certain areas of the world that you sense God wants you to focus on besides giving at home?
- What percentage of your total giving should be allocated to each choice?

EVALUATING MINISTRIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS

Noted management consultant, Pat McMillan, has developed a list of questions in his book, *Hiring Excellence*, that can serve as a helpful guide to evaluate particular ministries.

1. Are the leaders marked by godly characteristics?
2. Is the ministry active in God's "hot spots?"
3. Is the ministry innovative?
4. Is the ministry growing and cooperative?
5. Is the ministry goal-oriented?
6. Is the ministry accountable?
7. Is the ministry endorsed by a strong track record?

TOOLS FOR STRATEGIC GIVING

Depending on your objectives, there are numerous methods to give charitably - several are listed below. We encourage you to discuss with your financial professional the best method for your particular financial and estate planning situation.

GIVING NON-CASH APPRECIATED ASSETS

Giving appreciated assets, such as marketable securities or real estate, can be a "win-win" for both the giver and the receiver. This method allows the giver to maintain current cash, while reducing income and/or estate tax liabilities. The recipient acquires a gift that can be sold at fair market value - free of taxes. The following chart illustrates the benefits of giving appreciated assets.

THE BENEFITS OF GIVING APPRECIATED ASSETS vs. GIVING THE PROCEEDS FROM SELLING THE ASSET:

Current Market Value	\$50,000
Tax Cost Basics	\$10,000
20% Tax on \$40,000 Capital Gain if Stock Sold (\$50,000 - \$10,000)	\$8,000

	Sell Stock, Contribute Proceeds	Gift of Appreciated Stock
Current Market Value	\$50,000	\$50,000
Capital Gain Tax on Sale	- \$8,000	- n/a
Net Deductible Funds to Charity	= \$42,000	= \$50,000
Donor's Tax Rate	* 30%	* 30%
Tax Savings for Donation	= \$12,600	= \$15,000
Tax on Capital Gain	- \$8,000	- n/a
Net Tax Savings for Donor	= \$4,600	= \$15,000

Summary

Funds to Charity	\$42,000	\$50,000
Net Tax Savings for Donor	\$4,600	\$15,000
Total Benefit	\$46,600	\$65,000

TOOLS FOR STRATEGIC GIVING

Continued

Giving Through a Charitable Remainder Trust (CRT)

A Charitable Remainder Trust allows a beneficiary to receive a current income tax deduction and an immediate income stream from the assets placed in the trust. At the end of the trust agreement, all of the remaining trust assets pass to the designated charity.

Giving Through a Charitable Lead Trust (CLT)

A Charitable Lead Trust provides a means to give to charity for a specific period of time, with the remaining trust assets distributed to your designated beneficiaries. The charity receives an annual amount for the length of the trust agreement, while trust assets are distributed to your designated heirs.

(For more on these trusts, see the Estate Planning section.)

Giving Gifts of Life Insurance

Life insurance policies purchased while building a family may later in life prove to be good charitable gifts that can offer tax advantages. If other assets are now providing the income your family will need after your lifetime, consider transferring ownership of your policy to your favorite charity, thereby reducing estate taxes.

Giving Retirement Plan Assets

Because most retirement assets have been sheltered from income tax, they are subject to double taxation in your estate (income and estate tax). By bequeathing your retirement plan assets to your favorite charity, your heirs will realize income and estate tax savings and the charity will receive the full value of the gift.

Giving Closely Held Stock

Donating shares of a closely held stock to your favorite charity is another method of gifting assets. Once the donation is complete, the charity seeks redemption from the corporation, which then purchases the stock with retained earnings. The donor realizes an income tax deduction for the charitable gift as well as the ability to avoid capital gains taxes on its appreciated value, while maintaining a controlling interest in the company.

Giving Through a Donor Advised Fund or Foundation

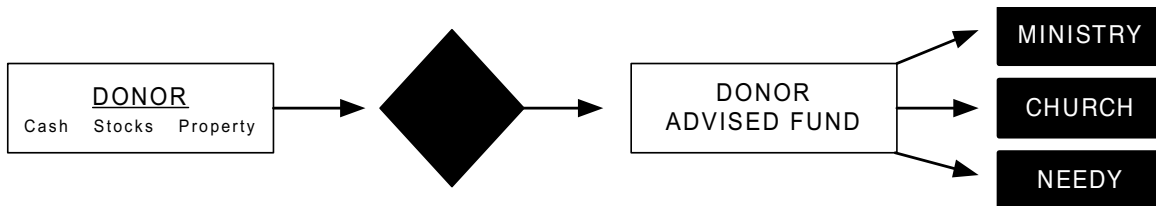
Making charitable contributions through a Donor Advised Fund or Foundation can offer a high level of flexibility, current and/or deferred tax advantages, and an assurance of asset distribution to specific charities or focus areas.

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

Historically God has used the giving of His faithful stewards to evangelize the lost, feed and comfort the poor, encourage and strengthen the body of Christ, and bring healing to the sick-to further His Kingdom. The National Christian Foundation (NCF) provides a way to simplify your charitable giving while retaining the benefits of giving for you, your family and the organizations you support.

Often giving, though a simple concept, can be quite complex. There are tax-related issues, administrative challenges, and time is required *to* benefit multiple charitable recipients. NCF provides a comprehensive solution to both small and large donors who desire to maximize their flexibility and minimize the administrative duties *of* making charitable contributions. NCF's purpose is to serve faithful Christian stewards and the organizations they support as a partner in advancing the Kingdom of God.

Donors wishing to utilize the benefits of NCF establish their own Donor Advised Fund at NCF. From this Fund they are able to make charitable contributions similar to having established their own private foundation, but without the restrictions and administrative burden often associated with private foundations. NCF operates on a low budget, holding expenses down while maintaining services to donors at a high professional level.



Because the National Christian Foundation is recognized as a public charity by the Internal Revenue Service, you have a great deal of flexibility in making distributions from your Fund. Before a distribution is made from your Fund, NCF investigates your recommendations, making certain the purpose of the distribution meets the purpose for which NCF enjoys tax exempt status.

As an added service, when you do not know where your financial resources may best be used, NCF keeps a priority list of organizations and individuals who are in need of support. Whether for world hunger, church development, evangelism, foreign missions, or helping a widow and her family, NCF's Board will be happy to assist you in finding a legitimate person or organization as an object of your bounty. NCF actively seeks recommendations of such worthy individuals and organizations from donor and non-donor alike. Funds are deposited either in investment portfolios with professional management or money market accounts.

SCRIPTURAL INSIGHTS ON STRATEGIC GIVING

"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."
MATTHEW 6:3

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work."

II CORINTHIANS 9:6-8

"If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing."

I CORINTHIANS 13:3

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."

MATTHEW 7:7-8

"Honor the Lord from your wealth, and from the first fruits of all your produce; so your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will overflow with new wine."

PROVERBS 3:9-10

"Each of you must bring a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your God has blessed you."

DEUTERONOMY 16:17

"As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 'I tell you the truth,' he said, 'this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.'"

LUKE 21:1-4

"For who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?"

I CORINTHIANS 4:7

"The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

I CORINTHIANS 10:26

SCRIPTURAL INSIGHTS ON STRATEGIC GIVING

Continued

"Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

LUKE 6:38

"On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made."

I CORINTHIANS 16:2

"So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other: You cannot serve both God and money."

LUKE 16:11-13

"Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

I TIMOTHY 6:18-19

"You shall generously give to him, and your heart shall not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all your undertakings. For the poor will never cease to be in the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to the needy and poor in your land. '"

DEUTERONOMY 15:10-11

"This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you."

II CORINTHIANS 9:12-14

"He who is generous will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor."

PROVERBS 22:9

SCRIPTURAL INSIGHTS ON STRATEGIC GIVING

Continued

"Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account."

PHILIPPIANS 4:17

"A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord."

LEVITICUS 27:30

"Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the Lord your God at the place He will choose as a dwelling for His Name, so that you may learn to revere the Lord your God always."

DEUTERONOMY 14:23

"For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have."

II CORINTHIANS 8: 12

"Calling His disciples to Him, Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything--all she had to live on.'"

MARK 12:43-44

"And let the one who is taught the Word share all good things with him who teaches."

GALATIANS 6:6

"And Jesus came up to them and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. '"

MATTHEW 28:18-20

"But whoever has the world's goods and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?"

I JOHN 3:17