

God's Plan for Our Stewardship

To inquire confidentially about aligning your financial life with God's plan, please contact:

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MINISTRIES FOUNDATION

A Ministry of Stewardship

Building God's kingdom by helping believers to plan their stewardship in an effective, strategic, heartfelt and Biblical way, through gift planning, estate design and other resources.

What does the Bible say about *stewardship* and how does this apply to me?

What *ministries* has God placed on my heart, and how can I help those ministries build God's Kingdom over the long-term?

How can I take my own financial situation or circumstances and best put them to work for the Lord in a *Biblical, effective and strategic way*?

I know God wants me to be a *good steward* of what is His, but what is the most effective way for me to do this?

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Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things. Enter into the joy of your master.

Matthew 25:21

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Many believers have answered God's call to be good stewards by providing for their families and showing tremendous generosity and personal commitment toward Kingdom work. Others of us may wonder how to be effective stewards of the money, possessions and time that God has entrusted to us.

As Christians, it is important to know that God, from the very beginning, has had a plan for our money and other assets. All that we have is His. That's why we are called stewards or caretakers of what we are given – because it's really not ours to begin with. God alone provides the correct view of how we should handle what He has given us. The Bible includes more than 2,000 verses on how we should handle money and possessions. God wants us to provide for our families, advance His Kingdom and ultimately provide an inheritance. But our standards for these activities often differ from the standards that God has set forth.

How we, as believers, handle money influences our fellowship with the Lord, family relationships, and our Christian witness. Good stewardship is a major aspect of our relationship with God, our ability to be intimate with Him, and our ability to help build the Kingdom.

The primary effort of Westminster Ministries Foundation is to help believers to consider and carry out the particular plan of stewardship that they believe God has set out for them. The Foundation takes a Biblical perspective, but also a practical perspective, by providing tools, resources and other support to believers who want to be more effective Christian stewards.

Westminster Ministries Foundation offers assistance through seminars, small groups and other programs, and by providing information on planned giving and estate design. We seek to alert Christians about current and deferred stewardship opportunities and to encourage the implementation and planning necessary to take advantage of these opportunities. However, we do not offer legal advice or perform any services that are normally carried out by attorneys or other licensed professionals.

Westminster Ministries Foundation is also available to facilitate gifts and bequests to Gospel-based initiatives, including, but not limited to, Westminster Presbyterian Church, Westminster Catawba Christian School, Westminster Towers and the Foundation itself.

God may be calling you to learn more about the stewardship plan that He has for you if:

- You want to know more about God's teaching about money and possessions.
- Money is a source of friction in your marriage or other relationships.
- You are experiencing a change in your life—retirement, sale of business, receipt of an inheritance, etc.—that is significantly changing your financial situation.
- You find it difficult to make financial decisions or to set and reach financial goals.
- You are living beyond your income or your debt consumes a disproportionate share of your income.
- Money distracts you from a deep relationship with God.
- Your support of Kingdom work is not what you desire.

Estate Design & Gift Planning

One of the many blessings of good stewardship is that God allows us to accumulate assets. These assets may include real estate, cash, securities, annuities, business interests, life insurance, retirement or pension plans, art, jewelry or other property.

These assets belong to God, just as our income belongs to Him. Assets and income provide the opportunity to build the Kingdom both before and after we pass to glory, as well as to leave family members an inheritance.

Westminster Ministries Foundation can be a helpful partner and catalyst as you carefully and prayerfully develop, implement and maintain an estate design to accomplish your specific goals.

The Foundation also can assist as you consider and accomplish planned gifts.

As we work with you on a confidential basis, various tools and topics may be considered:

Will or living trust – Your will or revocable living trust provides for inheritance, but it may also be used to make gifts to charity that would not be possible during life. An outright gift, such as a designated dollar amount or percentage of your estate, could be specified – for example, a tithe of 10% of your estate or provision for a “child of charity” upon your death. Your will or trust will also designate the personal representative or trustee, who will be charged with carrying out your wishes after your death.

Power of attorney – The realities of life dictate that we must think about who will be in a position to manage property and make health care decisions in case of mental or physical disability prior to death.

Living will – A living will or directive to physicians is a statement by you during a time of good mental and physical health that you do or do not wish to be kept alive by heroic means if there is no hope for survival.

Childrens’ trusts, trustees and guardians – In most states, the legal age for inheritance is 18 years old. How much money is a child of that age capable of receiving without affecting lifestyle? The guardianship of your minor children and the trusteeship of the assets you leave for their benefit are important people-planning decisions. Should premature death occur, the lifestyles and financial well-being of your children will be strongly influenced by the guardians and trustees that you designate.

IRAs and retirement/pension plans – You may be able to save future income taxes if you make a charitable organization a death beneficiary of your individual retirement account, pension, 401(k) or other retirement plan. Your estate may be able to save both income taxes and estate taxes.

Life insurance – There are several ways you may be able to use life insurance as a gift giving device. One of the simplest ways is to name a charitable organization as a beneficiary of either a new or existing policy.

Gifts of appreciated property such as stock or real estate – A gift of appreciated stock or other property owned one year or longer may provide you with two benefits: An income tax deduction for the fair market value of the asset and avoidance of capital gains tax. Real estate such as undeveloped land or a personal residence can often be gifted by deed to avoid capital gains or estate taxes on the appreciated value.

Charitable gift annuities – You may be able to guarantee a fixed income for your life and your spouse’s life by purchasing a charitable gift annuity using cash or appreciated property. A gift annuity usually offers two significant benefits: An immediate and substantial income tax charitable deduction; and favorably taxed income for life.

Charitable remainder trusts – By funding a charitable remainder trust with cash or appreciated property, you may be able to receive income from the assets for your lifetime, qualify for charitable deductions and save capital gains and estate taxes. Upon your death and/or that of a loved one, the trust assets would be distributed to your chosen charity.

Charitable lead trusts – Under this arrangement, you transfer assets to a trust that makes payments to charity for a specified number of years, after which time the assets are transferred to your heirs. A charitable lead trust will often allow you to pass assets on to your children and grandchildren with little or no estate and gift taxes.

Seminars, Small Groups, Other Programs

Practical and Spiritual Aspects of Estate Design – Westminster Ministries Foundation will offer this Biblically-based, thought provoking and useful seminar from time to time at Westminster Presbyterian Church and other locations. The setting may vary from Sunday school classes to small group meetings to large group dinners. But the focus will always be to discuss the Biblical foundation of Christian stewardship as well as to provide information on practical tools to improve the effectiveness of stewardship planning.

Financial Peace University (FPU) and other programs – FPU is an 11-week program that empowers and teaches you how to make wise money decisions, achieve your financial goals, and save more so that you can give more. The vision of Financial Peace University is twofold: To transform society, giving families hope to find the peace and freedom that comes from financial responsibility; and to find an everlasting peace through a relationship with the “Prince of Peace,” Christ Jesus. The Foundation may also offer similar programs by Crown Ministries or Randy Alcorn.

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