

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Leaving a Legacy with Planned Gifts

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“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” (Matthew 25:23, NIV). The power of words is immense. Mark Twain once commented that he believed he could live two months on one good compliment. I believe I could “live” much longer than that if God said the above words to me!

Funny thing about compliments – they must be earned. The words in the above verse were said to a *faithful* servant. Faithfulness is a function of both time and planning. The summer Olympic games were recently held in Sydney, Australia. While not everyone who competed won a medal, it is safe to say that no one received a medal who had not made that their goal. Likewise, God will never label you a faithful servant unless you plan your life around being a faithful steward of what God has given you.

The verse above is taken from Christ’s parable of the talents. The master in the parable gave talents to three servants in differing amounts. Two of the servants used and multiplied them. They were called faithful. The other servant did not. Guess what he was not called? God commands us to become faithful stewards. Stewardship is the use of God-given resources to accomplish God-given purposes. This involves more than just how we use money. It involves building a legacy of honoring God with all of what He has given us – and teaching others to do the same.

I work closely with many individuals and couples regarding finances and estate planning. The thing that surprises many people is that you do not need to decide between leaving money to the Lord’s work and leaving money to family. You can simultaneously leave money to your family, contribute to the Lord’s work,

and cultivate a giving mindset in your family by involving them in the giving process!

How many of you know the names of your parents? I assume all. How many of you know the names of all of your grandparents? Probably most. How many of you know the names of all of your great-grandparents? Probably very few. Within three generations, our own family will not remember the important facts of our lives. However, if we work toward building a legacy of giving and serving, our lessons can be passed on for many generations.

For those with medium- and large-sized estates, there are some technical aspects that you should discuss with professionals to make sure that you structure your estate to reduce federal estate taxes. There are different legal trusts and funds that can be used to properly build a Christian legacy. Many of these can provide income for the rest of your life, income to your family after your passing, and build assets that will benefit ministry. You can also include your family in the process of contributing these assets to the Lord’s work. *That* is a Christian legacy that will speak volumes to your family!

Would you like God to call you a faithful servant? Work on developing a legacy of being a faithful steward. Contact BBC FOUNDATION INC. and ask for our Introductory Pack. Make 2001 the year in which you lay some important foundations for your Christian legacy.

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: bbcfoundation.org; e-mail: info@bbcfoundation.org