

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Giving an Account of Your Stuff

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It seems that the need for the financial resources to fund God's work is always much greater than the money that is available. It also seems logical that if Christ has given us The Great Commission, then He has also given us the resources to accomplish it. Maybe the difficulty is not related to the amount of money that is available, but instead, how Christians spend their money. Research would indicate that believers are nearly as self-consumptive in their spending as unbelievers.¹ It may be that most Christians act without understanding that we will each be accountable for all of wealth God has entrusted to us.² The choices we make during our earthly lives have an eternal impact on the rewards or the loss of rewards we receive when we are home with the Lord.^{3,4} In light of this we may want to ask ourselves, what are we accomplishing for eternity with all of our wealth? If asked, would your family, friends and neighbors say that you are a person who puts God first in all things?

Randy Alcorn states, "Large segments of modern evangelicalism have succumbed to the heresy that this present life may be lived selfishly and disobediently without serious effects on the eternal state. Never have so many Christians believed that our monies and possessions are ours to do with as we please".⁵ Without a doubt Christians wrestle with the tension between their stuff and their spirituality.⁶ Yet, we are routinely reminded in Scripture that the use of our possessions demonstrates the spiritual condition of our heart. If you want to get a sense of how you measure up against God's plan for the money He has entrusted to you, you may want to review your last year's personal involvement in Great Commission efforts and your credit card statements and checkbook. Then, take a piece of paper and list all of the specific examples that demonstrate that God's kingdom and your eternal role in that kingdom have been your highest priority. Remember, the potential

rewards for faithful stewardship are significant and will vary from believer to believer.⁷

In case you find that you have not wisely used your resources in the last year, let me encourage you, you are not alone and it is never too late to make an eternal difference. God understands that believers find the area of stewardship very difficult. So much so that Scripture contains 2,172 references to possessions, about three times more than love, seven times more than prayer, and eight times more than belief.⁸ The truth is the western church spends nearly 99.9% of its wealth on itself. Only a little over .1% is spent on cross-cultural evangelism. Less than .01% is spent on evangelizing the unreached, nearly one-third of the world's population.⁹

If this is a reflection of your own spending habits, commit this very moment to pray for God's grace and wisdom in developing stewardship habits that honor Him. Then, commit to your spouse that this is an area in which you desire to improve. Give input to your church, as appropriate, to influence its investment in causes that advance The Great Commission locally and globally. Be disciplined and trust God as you gradually increase your giving over the years.

Remember, you are not alone. Good godly counsel is available from a number of organizations. If you would like some assistance with identifying how you might free up some of your wealth to fund God's work, please give us a call. We have a number of self-help resources and financial counselors on staff that would be happy to share with you ways to improve your investments in advancing The Great Commission.

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

¹ Barrett, D. & Johnson, T. (1999, January). International Bulletin of Missionary Research.

² Revelation 3:11; Matthew 25:28-29; 2 John 8.

³ Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:9,10.

⁴ Luke 16:10-12.

⁵ Money, Possessions, and Eternity (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1989), preface.

⁶ God and Your Stuff (Colorado Springs, CO; Navpress, 2002).

⁷ Proverbs 24:11,12; Matthew 19:27-30; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15; Luke 19:17,19,26.

⁸ God and Your Stuff (Colorado Springs, CO; Navpress, 2002).

⁹ Barrett, D. & Johnson, T. (1999, January). International Bulletin of Missionary Research.