

CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

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Purpose-Driven Finances- Equipped to be Partners

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“What on earth am I here for?” That is the question that Pastor Rick Warren attempts to answer in his book, The Purpose-Driven Life. Last week I introduced the concept of Purpose-Driven Finances. Using money on purpose – God’s purposes.

Warren identifies five focuses for Christians: worship, ministry, evangelism, fellowship, and discipleship. Last week we covered purpose driven finances in the area of worship (created to be stewards). Now let’s examine purpose driven finances in terms of ministry.

Ministry – Equipped to be Partners

God created us to be stewards and commands us to be stewards (Gen 1:28), but He does not stop there. These only relate to our capacity for stewardship. God also provides the resources to live out our stewardship. In other words, we are *equipped* for stewardship. Together, Christians have everything they need to fund and perform ministry. Through sharing, some have the opportunity to graciously give, and others have the opportunity to graciously receive.

Also, stewardship makes us *partners* with God. We are not equipped to be owners, thieves or even managers. We are equipped to be partners. God uses finances to develop our relationship with Him. He wants us to listen to Him, and to value what He values. Much like a parent who uses an allowance as a teaching tool, God uses finances to develop our skills and trust in Him.

God knows that we face intense desires to not partner with Him – to act like owners. An owner is tempted to act like he will always possess an asset and gets to make the final decision on it use. But God has stated that He has that role (Ps 24:1).

Wise people know where to put their trust. “Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to be good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the

future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed” (1 Tim. 6:17-19, NASB).

God wants each of us to have a ministry in the lives of others. He could meet peoples’ needs directly, but He chooses to give to us so He can help people through us. We could haphazardly meet needs, but how do we use finances to foster God’s desire for us to minister to people?

- Give while you have the chance – Riches are uncertain. Give now while you can.
- Live with open hands – You may have something that God wants given to another person.
- Align your giving & volunteer efforts – Focus your giving and your efforts on issues you are passionate about so you can truly make a difference in a specific area.
- Use money to change your heart – Generosity helps you combat selfishness and develop a greater heart for God and others. Can you afford not to practice generosity?

If I could hand you a magic wand that you could use to solve any one spiritual issue in the world, what would it be? Fund all missionaries? More church plants? Every Christian a committed disciple? Solve world hunger in Christ’s name? If God cares about that issue, and you are passionate about it, you may have found a ministry worth giving your life to – and your finances.

I have a friend who has the spiritual gift of giving. As he gives, he grows closer to God and feels the exhilaration of ministering to others. Like my friend, all of us are *equipped to be partners*.

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