

Are you Reaching your **GIVING** Goals?



Now this I say, he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2
Corinthian 9:6-7

What are your Giving Goals?

At the end of the month or the end of the year how much money do you hope to have given away? What about your lifetime? What kind of impact do you hope to have made through your generosity? A lot of people spend time thinking about how to maximize their time on earth and

even how to use their God-given talents to make a difference in this world. But what about your treasure that God has entrusted to you. God does expect us to have an impact with our money (see the verse above). It is interesting that He allows us to decide as to how we are going to participate in this manner. "Each one must do just as he has **purposed in his heart**, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." He wants us to willingly, good-heartedly, and even cheerfully give towards His Kingdom.

Your Family has Potential

We all have different family units. No matter whether you are single or married, a parent or childless, if you are a Christ-follower you are one of the change agents. No matter the shape of your family, you are part of the family of God and represent Him in the world. Each of our families are a testimony to what God can do. We are blessed so that we might be a blessing and point the way to Jesus. The Christian family is one of the most powerful entities in all the earth. We have the potential to be one of the greatest change agents for good in our world.

Your family has the potential to be one of the greatest change agents for good in our world.

Do you believe that?

In the book *Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money* by Christian Smith, Michael Emerson, and Patricia Snell, the authors address a significant question: What difference would it make if American Christians were more generous? Listen to their opening paragraph:

Let us begin on a positive note. The up-side potential for good in the U.S. Christian giving is immense, almost unimaginable. If American Christians were to give from their income generously, not lavishly, mind you, only generously - they could transform the world, starting right away. Ordinary American Christians have within their power the capacity to foster massive and unprecedented spiritual, social, cultural, and economic change that closely reflects their values and interests. To achieve such dramatic, world-transforming change, ordinary American Christians simply need to do one thing: start giving reasonably generously from their income, let us say 10 percent of post-tax income.

After working through their research project, they conclude this:

Our research has shown simply that, if American Christians could somehow find a way to move to practices of reasonably generous giving, they could generate, over and above what they currently give, a total of another 133.4 billion a year to devote to whatever purposes and needs they would choose. What good in the world U.S. Christians could do with an additional 133.4 billion, year after year, is almost unimaginable, simply astonishing, nearly beyond comprehension.

You may not be an American family and that is ok. So, you might think about the impact of your country. What if each Christian family in your country was dedicated to see God's kingdom go forward with their finances.

With those kinds of resources, it could mean that every church would have what it needed for ministry, every missionary could be fully funded, and we would have enough money to address many of the needs of our communities. The Church of Jesus Christ would truly be looked upon as the source of good in our lost world even more than it is now. The content in chapter one alone is worth the price of their book, as they lay out in practical terms what could be done if Christians in America just began to give generously. We highly recommend it. The potential, collective financial power from followers of Jesus is staggering, and it is easy to see how God might use our resources to make His Name famous throughout the earth.

However, this article is not about the collective impact of us all, but rather is focused on the individual impact of your family. We love that the worldwide family of God can have a global impact, but we will focus on the impact of your individual Christian family.

What kind of impact will your family make?

Why Should We Give?

What is your WHY when it comes to giving? What motivates you to give? Here are a few reasons that we have brainstormed over the years. Feel free to borrow one of ours.

The following are five of the reasons why the Christian family should give. All of these have a positive outcome for the giver and the receiver. They spell the word **OBEY** and should give us a great start to finding our motivation for generosity.

OBEY – We give to “obey” the Lord. Because God expects it, we simply obey Him.

O - Others - We give to meet the needs of others. What a blessing to be able to help other people in need.

B – Battle - We give because we are in a spiritual battle. For the Christian family we are involved in a cosmic struggle for the glory of God and the souls of men and women. Our generosity can provide the resources to get people connected with the lost.

E - Example of God - We give because of the example of God. God so loved the world that He Gave- He gave the lavish gift of His one and only Son that we would not perish but have eternal life.

Y – You - You give because YOU are blessed by God when you give. God blesses us when we give.

Are you generous towards God's Kingdom?

The average believer is giving 1-3% of their income and feel terrible about it. Many Christians we talk with want to be more generous but aren't sure how to pull it off. This is a huge issue in their personal finances. And this is a huge issue in the Church with our responsibility to fulfill the Great Commission. It stands to reason that if God owns the money, He has given us to manage, that He might be interested in some of it going towards His causes. One guy says it this way- God gives us money to take care of our family and His family.

In the New Testament, there are at least seven key areas believers are expected to give. A helpful acronym to remember is **WELCOME**.

- W- Widows and orphans- James 1:27
- E- Elderly parents- I Timothy 5:3-16 (focus vs 8), Mark 7:9-13
- L- The local church- Acts 4:36-37, 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Acts 13:1-3 , 1 Corinthians 16:1-4, Galatians 6:6-10, I Timothy 5:3-16
- C- Other Christians- Acts 2:43-47, 4:32-35, 6:1-6; 2 Corinthians 8, 2 Corinthians 9, James 2:14-17, 1 John 3:16-18
- O- The poor- Matthew 6:2-4 (Sorry about the alliteration- two O in pOOr.)
- M- Missions- 1 Corinthian 9, 3 John 5-8 , Romans 15:22-24, Acts 15:3, Titus 3:13-14, 1 Corinthians 16:5-6
- E- Personal Evangelism and Discipleship- Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, Matthew 5:13-16, Hebrews 13:2, Ephesians 2:10

How to make it Work Practically

Work through these diagnostic questions and come up with a plan.

- What do you have a heart to give towards? Pray about it.
- How much do you think God wants you to give? Pray about it.
- Do you have a plan to set that money aside so that you don't spend it on yourself?
- Where do you think God wants you to give the money you have set aside? Pray about it.
- When am I planning to give it? Weekly? Monthly? Quarterly? Annually?

After you work through your plan. Our encouragement is to just start giving. You don't have to have all the details worked out to get started. Just start!!

If we can help you with this, contact us at www.freedom5one.com