

## Your Guide to Discovering God's Will For Your Commitment

Our responses are pretty much conditioned by the society we live in. It is difficult to make "spiritual" choices when we are constantly inundated with the humanism and materialism of our day. Our material "comfort" zone seems constantly to be expanding. Our wants increasingly become our needs and we often therefore become incapable of making "value" choices.

For the Christian this can create a great deal of tension because the call to discipleship is a call to a radical life-style. We are to be a "peculiar" people, not odd but essentially different. We are to be witnesses of God's love in the world. Our life-style should constantly affirm to others our commitment to higher values than the mere trends and "isms" of the day.

When we are presented therefore with opportunities to support God's work, either generally or in special projects, we often struggle with our response. And we struggle because these "opportunities" become a test of our value-system. When our "comfort" and "need" zones consume all our resources, we are tempted to define our potential to give by what is left over after our needs have been met.

Responses however that come out of radical discipleship usually result in shrinking our "comfort" and "need" zones to reflect more adequately the balance we need in our lives in terms of real value choices.

This brochure is intended to give you guidance in helping you decide what your sacrificial gift will be to this campaign. As you read and work through this information, be open to God's leading and then be obedient to God's direction.

### Where do I begin?

**1.** Begin by praying a simple prayer, "Lord, please give me clear guidance on what you want me to

give. I thank you for all you have given to me. I want to be a cheerful giver. I trust you to continue to provide for my needs as you have promised. Thank you for this opportunity to invest in your work. Amen,"

**2.** Decisions that reflect sacrificial giving evolve over time. Quick decisions almost always represent token responses. Think about your response. Ask yourself the question, "How can I make a sacrificial gift?" The longer you sincerely think about it, the more ways God will show you. You will be amazed at what you are able to do after serious thought and reflection.

**3.** If you are married, plan a time away for a family conference. Have you ever involved your spouse, or your family in giving decisions? If not, this would be a good time to start. If you are single, you might want to talk with a friend. If you have children this is a great way to teach them about giving and faith.

**4.** In the next column there is a brief Bible Study guide. Work through the various Scripture passages. Try to discern their meaning and then ask the question, "How does this apply to me?" or "What do these passages teach me about the relationship between faith and finance?"

**5.** Do a thorough analysis of your financial habits. It is very constructive to put on paper where you are currently allocating the money you earn. Such an overview becomes the basis for answering the question, "What spending habit can I change so that I can make a sacrificial commitment?"

When you have worked through the preceding five suggestions, you are ready to complete the worksheet. The worksheet will help you decide as an individual or as a family what the amount of your commitment will be.

### Remember:

- The secret of the church reaching its full potential is for everyone to help.
- Each individual/family needs to give at the level of their ability to give.

Remember . . . Not equal gifts but equal sacrifice.'

### What Does the Bible Say About the Relationship of Faith and Finances?

It is important as you begin thinking about your response to this Campaign to focus on what the Bible says about faith and finances. Read through the passages below and be open to what God says to you. I would encourage you to read these passages, using a new translation like the New International Version, or a paraphrase such as The Living Bible.

#### I Chronicles 29: 10-19

- What does David say about the source of our finances?
- What does David say about why we should be generous in our response?

#### Matthew 6: 19-21

- What does God say is the best investment we can make?

#### II Corinthians 9: 6-8

- What does Paul mean about sowing "sparingly" and "generously"?
- Would it be better to give "grudgingly" or not to give at all?

#### I Timothy 6: 17-19

- What is the source of our wealth?
- Is it wrong to be rich?
- What special obligations do rich people have?

### Remember:

- Giving helps me put God first in my life because apart from the amount involved, there is the "need of the giver to give."

- Token giving is always painful giving because we give for the wrong reasons.
- The world says, 'Keep!' God says, "Give."
- What we spend our money on is an accurate reflection of what we think is most important.

### What is Sacrificial giving?

Sacrifice is a foreign concept to most people today! In our affluence and material "comfort" zones, there is little call for sacrifice. Oh we may occasionally give up the odd things here and there, but that is hardly sacrifice!

The Bible however, speaks much about sacrifice. The meaning of sacrifice is like a two-sided coin. One side has to do with the attitude of the giver, the other with the value of what is given.

Those who give sacrificially see giving as an act of praise and worship. They give with an attitude of gratitude. They therefore give cheerfully.

And what they give as a gift to God is usually the best, something of value. In the sacrifices found in the Old Testament, only the best was used. They offered the "first fruits" of their labor.

In II Samuel 24, David the King is instructed to buy a piece of property from Araunah, a Jebusite, to make a sacrifice to God. Araunah, because of his reverence for David, offered to give David the property. He also told David, "Take my best oxen as a gift to make your sacrifice to God". David, however, had learned the meaning of sacrifice and said to Araunah, "I will not offer to my God that which cost me nothing!" (vs.24) What is sacrificial giving? It may be more easily recognized than defined. Most certainly sacrificial giving implies the right attitude . . . but also giving back to God something which costs, something of value.

A gift is probably not sacrificial until it relates to our ability to give. Token giving is always painful giving. Sacrificial giving is always joyful giving.

## Giving Guide

Weekly	Monthly	3-Year Total
\$10	\$43	\$1,560
\$15	\$65	\$2,340
\$25	\$108	\$3,900
\$35	\$151	\$5,460
\$50	\$216	\$7,800
\$75	\$325	\$11,700
\$100	\$433	\$15,600
\$125	\$541	\$19,500
\$150	\$650	\$23,400
\$200	\$866	\$31,200
\$250	\$1,083	\$39,000
\$300	\$1,300	\$46,800

This Giving Guide will help you realize the power of the three-year commitment. Smaller amounts over the three-year period do result in very significant commitments.

As you look at this grid, ask the question, “What for me would be a sacrificial commitment?” If you can do it easily it is probably not sacrificial! In this campaign we are encouraging commitments over a three-year period primarily because it greatly increases potential.

### Potential

In campaigns that have a short giving window, responses are usually one-time cash gifts. This limits potential because people respond out of what they have in their “pocket” today. When people however are encouraged to consider a 3-year commitment response, they can give from ‘three years’ potential and this greatly increases their ability to give. This is particularly true of people on fixed incomes. The “Giving Guide” illustrates this. There is tremendous “power” in the 3-year giving window.

### If you were considering a three-year commitment, what could you give?

Certainly more than a one-time gift! The multiplication factor of 156 weeks, or 36 months

enables individuals to give a smaller regular gift which over three years becomes a significant response.

So ... Don’t say to yourself, “Given the size of our project, my gift will not make a lot of difference;” ‘Yes, it will! We need everyone to do what they can. If that happens, the project will be successful.

- - Don’t say to yourself, “I can’t give much and therefore I won’t give at all!” The size of the gift is not as important as the fact that you give . . . what you can. Because every gift, is accompanied by an overall commitment to the work of Christ.
- - Don’t be overwhelmed by the size of the project. If everyone gives at their level of ability to give, large or small, the project will succeed and God will be honored.

### What are the Various Ways I Can Give?

The starting point for all giving ‘is that we “honor God with our substance.” As Christians we each have the responsibility to support God’s work, giving back to God out of gratitude for the blessings of life we have received. Many Christians would suggest that the “starting point” is the tithe, 10% of our income. Others who may not tithe do give regularly albeit at lower levels.

If therefore you are already giving regularly, perhaps sacrificially, and are asking the question, “What can I do additionally to support the project?’ here are a few suggestions that may help.

### What can I postpone?

Perhaps a major purchase, such as a car (make the old one do a few more years), a major appliance, renovations to your home. Rather than go for that annual “deserved” vacation to a warm place, vacation close to home. Instead of investing in your “portfolio,” make an investment in God’s work. Are there other things you can postpone and give?

### What spending habits can I change?

It is amazing how much money we spend casually with no second thought about what it amounts to over time.

#### Consider:

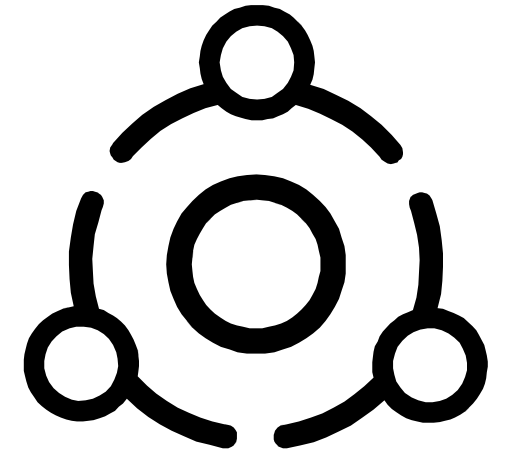
- - A donut and coffee each day (\$2.00 over 3 years = \$2190).
- Dinner out monthly with the family (\$50.00 Over 3 years = \$1,800).
- One video rental per week (\$6.00 over 3 years - \$936.00).
- Cable TV (\$40.00 per month over 3 years = \$1,440),
- Anything else?

### How can I earn extra income?

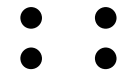
If you are in sales, trust God to provide extra contacts, and if God does, give the extra. Have an extra room you can rent out? (\$300 per month over 3 years = \$10,800). Can you work part-time, perhaps at home? (\$500 per month over 3 years = \$18,000). Hold a garage sale, use this as an opportunity to simplify your storage needs, (proceeds - ?) I’m sure you can think of other things

#### Remember:

The above suggestions are not given as a substitute for regular sacrificial giving. They are given to help individuals who are asking the question, “What more can I do?”



# Imagine!



# Transformation