

# **Taking the “Stew” Out of Stewardship**

## **What Good Stewards Know About Giving**

*1 Chronicles 29:1-17*

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# What Good Stewards Know About Giving<sup>1</sup>

## Scripture

There is a story told about Ivan the Great who ruled Russia as Czar in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. He was a warrior, a fighter, and a conqueror of kingdoms. The Soviet Union, as we knew it about twenty years ago, was basically put into place by Ivan the Great.

Ivan was so busy doing battle that some of his comrades became concerned because he hadn't taken time to get married and have a family. They came to him and said, "You've got to get married because you've got to have an heir to the throne."

But Ivan said, "I want to do battle and to conquer more territory. You go find a wife for me."

So they did. Ivan's men found a wife for him. She was the daughter of the king of Greece, a beautiful girl. They said to Ivan, "We found a wife for you, but there's one problem."

"What's that?" he asked.

"If you're going to marry her, you have to be Greek Orthodox," they said.

Ivan the Great said, "Well, if you think she'd make a good wife for me, that's no problem. I could be Greek Orthodox."

The king of Greece was thrilled with the marital alliance because it meant that Ivan wasn't going to invade his territory. So the Greeks sent tutors to Russia to tutor Ivan and five hundred of his elite soldiers, every one of whom was a great warrior. The soldiers required tutoring because Ivan said, "If I'm going to be Greek Orthodox, then they're going to be Greek Orthodox too."

The Greeks tutored all these men in the Greek Orthodox faith. Finally Ivan and his soldiers went to Greece for the wedding.

But, before the wedding, they had to be baptized into the Greek Orthodox Church. It was an incredible sight. Thousands of

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the material for this message comes from Rod Rogers, *Pastor Driven Stewardship: 10 Steps to Lead Your Church to Biblical Giving* (Dallas, TX: Brown Books Publishing Group, 2006).

people came to watch Ivan the Great and his five hundred soldiers all wade into the water at one time to be baptized by immersion into their new church.

Five hundred soldiers with full armor and five hundred Greek Orthodox priests were standing in the blue water of the Mediterranean Sea for the baptism. Suddenly, the king of Greece said, “Hold it! We’ve got a problem!” The problem was that in the Greek Orthodox Church you could not be a warrior *and* a member of the church at the same time.

So they held a hastily-called diplomatic meeting in the water to ask, “How are we going to work this out?” They came up with a simple answer. Just before the priests immersed the soldiers, each man took out his sword, held it high above the water, and allowed the priest to baptize everything but his arm and his sword.

This came to be known as “the unbaptized arm.”

Many of God’s children today have unbaptized checkbooks. They have dedicated every part of their life to God except their money. Someone once said, “The last thing to be converted is our pocketbook.” Why is that? I believe that Christians fail to dedicate their checkbooks to Christ because they believe one or more myths about money and giving:

- Myth 1: My money and possessions belong to me.
- Myth 2: I can’t afford to give. If I give, I’ll go in the hole financially.
- Myth 3: My attitude toward money and giving has no relationship to my spiritual growth and life.
- Myth 4: If I give my money to the Lord’s work, I’ll feel a sense of loss and sadness.

Because I’m convinced that it is to your benefit to give to God and his work, I want to expose the fallacy in each of these myths in this morning’s message. So, please turn in your Bibles to 1 Chronicles 29:1-17. Let’s read 1 Chronicles 29:1-17:

<sup>1</sup> Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. <sup>2</sup> With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. <sup>3</sup> Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: <sup>4</sup> three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, <sup>5</sup> for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the LORD?"

<sup>6</sup> Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king's work gave willingly. <sup>7</sup> They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. <sup>8</sup> Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. <sup>9</sup> The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.

<sup>10</sup> David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,

**"Praise be to you, O LORD,  
God of our father Israel,  
from everlasting to everlasting.**

**<sup>11</sup> Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power  
and the glory and the majesty and the splendor,  
for everything in heaven and earth is yours.**

**Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom;  
you are exalted as head over all.**

**<sup>12</sup> Wealth and honor come from you;  
you are the ruler of all things.  
In your hands are strength and power  
to exalt and give strength to all.  
<sup>13</sup> Now, our God, we give you thanks,  
and praise your glorious name.**

**<sup>14</sup> “But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.  
<sup>15</sup> We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. <sup>16</sup> O LORD our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. <sup>17</sup> I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you.” (1 Chronicles 29:1-17)**

## **Introduction**

First Chronicles 29:1-17 records an event at a time in the history of Israel when their spiritual life was at its peak. The main character is King David, at this time an old man who was transferring the royal scepter to his son Solomon. He had a passion for many years to build a magnificent temple for the Lord.

Up to this time, the worship of God was centered around a special tent. God told David that because he had been a man of bloodshed, he would not be allowed to build the temple. Solomon his son would have that privilege.

In our text, we have the story of the day that David called a national assembly and challenged the people to give generously to the building of the temple. This is an inspiring story of God’s people giving generously to God’s work.

## Lesson

In 1 Chronicles 29:1-17, God teaches eight lessons on giving to his work. These are lessons that we in the twenty-first century church need to learn and apply. Let's look at them.

### I. **When We Give to the Work of God, We Are Not Giving to Man but to God (29:1)**

The first lesson on giving to the work of God is that when we give to the work of God, we are not giving to man but to God.

David said that the work of building the temple was a great work, large and expensive, because it wasn't being built for man, but for the worship and the glory of God. He said that to encourage the people to give. In verse 1 King David said to the whole assembly: **"My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the Lord God."**

It's one thing to give your hard-earned money to a man. But it is something else entirely to give your money to the God of the universe.

In our New Testament era, we aren't involved in building a literal temple, but a spiritual one, the church of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said in 1 Corinthians 3:16-17, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple." The church family as a group is in view in this passage. "You" is plural in the Greek text. Together we form the temple of God in which God's Spirit dwells.

Paul said in Ephesians 2:21, "In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord." "Building" and "holy temple" are references to the people of God.

When God builds a local church, he is building a spiritual temple. As God brings people to faith in Jesus and to join the

church fellowship, and as people grow spiritually, God is building a spiritual temple.

When you give money to the ministry of a local church, you are contributing to the building of a spiritual temple in which God is worshipped and glorified.

It should encourage you to give when you remember that when you write a check to our church you are writing it to God, not to a mere human being.

The ministry of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is God's work, not something I dreamed up. We are fulfilling a mission that God gave to us, which is to bring people to Jesus Christ and membership in his church family, develop them to Christlike maturity, equip them for their ministry in the church and life mission in the world, in order to magnify God's name.

When you give to the work of our church, you are giving to God, not to man.

## **II. God Wants Us to Give to His Work with all of Our Ability (29:2a)**

The second lesson on giving to the work of God is that God wants us to give to his work with all of our ability.

David said that he had donated to the building of the temple with all of his ability in verse 2a: **“With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God.”**

David had immense financial resources. He used all his financial ability to give to the temple project. He didn't give small gifts because he had the ability to give large amounts.

God also wants you and me to give to the work of his church with all of our ability.

If we have the ability to give 10 percent of our income to the church, we should do so. But if we have the ability to give 30 percent to God's work, we should give that. That also means that if we have the ability to give 10 percent, and we choose to give only 4 percent, we are not giving with all our ability.

Some people say that they aren't able to give anything, but the New Testament teaches that we can give even beyond our ability. Speaking of the Macedonian churches, the apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 8:1-3, "And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability." Here were Christians who gave based on their ability to give and who even gave more than they could afford to give.

You will not please God with your giving until you are able to give to his work with all of your ability.

### **III. God Wants Us to Give Generously to His Work (29:2-5a; 14a)**

The third lesson on giving to the work of God is that God wants us to give generously to his work.

King David gave an enormous fortune. We read what he gave in verses 2-5a: **"With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: three thousand talents of gold (gold of Ophir) and seven thousand talents of refined silver, for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings, for the gold work and the silver work, and for all the work to be done by the craftsmen."**

As I said, King David gave an enormous fortune. Assuming a talent weighed about 75 lbs., the 3,000 talents of gold amounted to about 112 tons of gold, plus the 7,000 talents of silver amounted to



262 tons of silver. The total worth of such precious metals is in the trillions of dollars! Furthermore, David evaluated that the amount that he and the people had given was generous. He said in verse 14a, **“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this?”**

Generous giving is a major principle of New Testament giving also. We see that regarding the Macedonian churches, of whom Paul said that “out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity” (2 Corinthians 8:2). The church in Macedonia was very poor. Yet they gave generously.

To give generously means to give with an open heart, with a free and open attitude toward giving. To give generously also means to give with an open hand, with as large a gift as possible.

#### **IV. A Genuine Delight in the Work of God Will Motivate Us to Give Generously (29:3)**

The fourth lesson on giving to the work of God is that a genuine delight in the work of God will motivate us to give generously.

David identified this principle in verse 3, where he said, **“Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple.”**

It was David’s delight in seeing a temple built for the worship and glory of God, that prompted him to give generously.

David was a genuinely spiritual man. His priorities in life were centered on building God’s reputation and promoting the worship of God, not on building his own reputation and kingdom.

The key to having the motivation to give generously to God’s church is getting excited about the right things.

Many Christians are more excited about furthering their own reputation and rank in the company, and in increasing their own

material wealth, than they are in seeing the church of Christ and the glory of God increased.

Here is an important spiritual principle: *You will always spend your money on what is most important to you.* If acquiring material possessions is your delight, you'll spend all your money on buying stuff. If an education is your delight, you'll spend all your money on acquiring degrees. But if the work of God is your delight, you will give generously to the work of God.

If your giving to the church of Jesus Christ is poor, it may well be a sign that you are not excited about the things in which God delights. And, conversely, if you truly delight in the growth of Christ's church, put your money where your heart is.

## **V. Our Giving Is a True Indicator of the Depth of Our Commitment to Christ (29:5b)**

The fifth lesson on giving to the work of God is that our giving is a true indicator of the depth of our commitment to Christ.

In verse 5b David asked a question: **"Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?"** David indicated in the question he asked that giving to the temple project was a matter of consecration to the Lord.

David's generous gifts for the temple came from a consecrated heart. He was dedicated to God, and his dedication inevitably expressed itself in the donation of material possessions to God's work.

Believers who have consecrated their lives to God are always and inevitably generous givers to God's church. You can't be fully dedicated to Christ and hate to give. If you truly love God with all your heart, you will love to give to his work. You won't be able to help yourself.

If you truly love God deeply, no one will be able to hold you back from giving. I could ask you not to give any more money to our church and you would fight me for the privilege.

You cannot be consecrated to both God and money at the same time. Jesus said it this way in Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.”

The two are mutually incompatible. If you’re dedicated to the accumulation and enjoyment of money, you’re not committed to serving Christ. If you’re stingy in your giving, you’re not a faithful servant of God.

Therefore, what does your level of giving to your church tell you about the depth of your love and commitment to Jesus Christ?

## **VI. God Wants Us to Give Willingly to His Work (29:6-9)**

The sixth lesson on giving to the work of God is that God wants us to give willingly to his work.

The inspired writer of this passage places great emphasis on the *willingness* with which the people gave to the temple. He repeated the word “willing” four times in verses 6-9 and verse 17: **“Then the leaders of families, the officers of the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of the king’s work gave *willingly*. They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the Lord in the custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. The people rejoiced at the *willing* response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly. . . . I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given *willingly* and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how *willingly* your people who are here have given to you”** (emphasis added).

David and the people didn’t give because they felt guilty, or pressured, or because they needed a tax break. They gave out of a sincere desire to give.

The New Testament makes it very clear that this is a principle of giving that is important to God. The apostle Paul said to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 9:7, “Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

God doesn’t want your offering if you give it *reluctantly*—wishing you could spend it on a new stereo or a new blouse.

God doesn’t want your offering if you give it under *compulsion*—because someone is twisting your arm and putting you under pressure.

God is only pleased with your offering when you give it *cheerfully*—with a sincere desire to further God’s work.

Would you be pleased with a Christmas gift that you had to force your child to purchase for you? Neither is God pleased with offerings that you give to him reluctantly and resentfully.

God has commanded you to give, but if you give with an unwilling attitude, your offering doesn’t please God. You might as well keep it.

## **VII. When We Give to God’s Work Willingly and Generously, We Will Experience Great Joy (29:9)**

The seventh lesson on giving to the work of God is that when we give to God’s work willingly and generously, we will experience great joy.

David and his people rejoiced greatly after they had given willingly and generously. We see that in verse 9, “**The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. David the king also rejoiced greatly.**” And also in verse 17, “**I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I**

**have seen with *joy* how willingly your people who are here have given to you.”**

Notice the sacred writer’s emphasis on *joy*. Joy was a result of having given to God’s work.

You will never know all the joy possible to you in life until you begin to give to God as you should. Why? Because God is a God who loves to give, and he created you with the need to give, so that when you give you feel joy.

Jesus taught this too. We read in Acts 20:35 that the Lord Jesus himself said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Jesus said that when you give, you will receive more happiness than when you receive. You can see this clearly in life. The happiest people I know are the most generous givers. Some of the most unhappy people I know are the stingiest givers. Those who hoard all they can get for themselves in an attempt to be happy, doom themselves to unhappiness.

If you really want to know true joy in your life, start giving generously to God and his church.

### **VIII. The Most Basic Reason to Give to God’s Work Is Because All Our Money Comes from God and Belongs to God (29:10-16)**

And the eighth lesson on giving to the work of God is that the most basic reason to give to God’s work is because all our money comes from God and belongs to God.

Listen to David’s prayer in verses 10-16: **“David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying, ‘Praise be to you, O Lord, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. Now, our God, we give**

**you thanks, and praise your glorious name. But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. We are aliens and strangers in your sight, as were all our forefathers. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. O Lord our God, as for all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name, it comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you.”**

David makes two key points in these verses. First, everything we have came from God. We would have nothing, no money, no possessions, no family, no health, and no life if God hadn’t given it to us.

James 1:17 says, “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

1 Corinthians 4:7 says, “For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?”

Deuteronomy 8:17-18 says, “You may say to yourself, ‘My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.’ But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.”

There is no such thing as a self-made person. Your ability to make a living is a direct gift from God. Everything you own—house, cars, jewelry, TV—came from God. He is the source of all your possessions. When you give to God, you are merely giving back some of what he first gave to you (1 Chronicles 29:14). How ungrateful we would be to receive every good thing we have from God and then to be stingy in giving to his work for his glory.

The second key point David makes here is that everything we have belongs to God. We see that in verses 11 and 16. You are not an owner of anything, but a steward of God’s possessions. A stew-

ard is someone who manages the resources of another, to accomplish the goals of the owner.

Since everything you have come from God and belongs to God, simple gratitude should motivate you to give as much as you can of God's money to God's work.

Imagine that you buy your teenage son a Ford Mustang. You give him the gas money, pay the huge insurance premiums, cover the costs of the maintenance and repairs, and let him drive it. How would you feel if one Friday night you wanted to take your wife out on a date in the Mustang, but your son refused to let you use "his" car? That's how God feels when we act as if the money and possessions he has given us in the first place belong to us.

When you accept the truth that you are merely a steward of the possessions of a loving and generous God, you will want to give generously to God and to the advancement of his kingdom.

### **Conclusion**

Someone once defined stewardship as "what I do after I say I believe." Proper stewardship of money is my grateful response to all that God has done for me and given to me.

Take a moment now to evaluate yourself:

- How good a steward have you been?
- Is God pleased with the way you've handled his possessions?
- Are you proud of the way you've handled his money?
- Could someone tell by looking at your giving that you are dedicated to God?
- Based on the teaching of God's word this morning, are you willing to take your checkbook and baptize it? Are you willing to consecrate even your wallet to Christ's service?





# Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ  
and **membership** in his church family,  
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,  
equip them for their **ministry** in the church  
and life **mission** in the world,  
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

## Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

This sermon, and other sermons, by the Rev. Freddy Fritz can be found at:

1. [www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/Sermons](http://www.tampabaypresbyterian.org/Sermons)
2. [www.sermoncentral.com/contributor\\_profile.asp?ContributorID=11181](http://www.sermoncentral.com/contributor_profile.asp?ContributorID=11181)
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**PRAAYER:**

Our Father in heaven, thank you for teaching us this morning about what good stewards know about giving. O Lord, we want to be good stewards. We want to give in such a way that you are glorified and your church strengthened.

I pray for everyone here who is part of your church family. Help each one to be a cheerful giver. Help each one to be a generous giver. Help each one to give willingly and with joy.

Help each one of us to implement the principles we have looked at this morning so that we can become good stewards of your money. And all of this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

**CHARGE:**

May the God who owns all things help each one of you to be content with the money and possessions he has given to you. And as you do, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.