

35. Your Future 1: Learning to Give

Introduction

We have spent a significant amount of time together during this course working on your vision and goals and learning about budgets, credit, debt, insurance, investing, retirement, and other important subjects. These topics are critical to self-reliance and getting our financial houses in order. However, there are two more important areas we have not yet discussed. These topics are often left out of traditional personal finance courses, but they are critical to a complete study on personal finance. The last two chapters in this manual discuss learning to give and deciding to decide.

Why should we learn about finance (we talked about this the first day of class)? This is an important questions as you can only manage your finances in one of two ways:

- With an eternal perspective, which says that everything is the Lord's and that we are stewards over these resources to bless His children, or
- With the world's perspective, which is any other way.

How we answer this question will have a big impact on what we do with our lives and resources

Objectives

When you have completed this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- A. Understand giving and the myths and realities of giving
- B. Understand the principles of wise giving
- C. Understand how to give effectively
- D. Understand how to create your individual/family giving plan.

Understand Giving and the Myths and Realities of Giving

We all wrestle with learning to give. A good starting point is defining “giving.” We can take a number of perspectives here, as usual. From a narrow (i.e., temporal) perspective, some may say it is sharing what they have with others. But where did they get it? Where did they get the intelligence to get it? Who gives them their breath to work for it to get it? Who gave them their bodies that they could use for it?

From our broader (i.e., eternal) perspective, it is the sharing of the things we have been given by God with our families and our fellow men. It is sharing God's gifts with others.

Some have wondered if giving was inherited or learned. The Lord through the prophet Joseph said: “See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.”¹

Elder Mark E. Petersen said: “Instead of taking from our fellowmen, we must learn to give—to be good Samaritans in very deed; to share with our less fortunate neighbors, and in reality show love for our fellowmen.”²

Some have wondered whether giving was expected or required. The Lord has said: “For of him unto whom much is given, much is required”³ and “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”⁴ “But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them.”⁵

This chapter will discuss our covenantal obligations to share with others. It has been said, “We make a living by what we get, but we build a life by what we give.”⁶ Any discussion on giving takes us back to the first chapter of this course, where we discussed the key doctrines and principles of personal finance. Those principles were ownership, stewardship, agency and accountability.

Once we understand these principles, giving becomes easier. I also find comfort in the scripture “See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.”⁷ We are not born as givers; rather, we learn to give as we become more committed Christians. We also come to understand that giving is not a one-time event but a Christ-like attribute. Mark E. Petersen wrote:

Instead of taking *from* our fellowmen, we must learn to *give*—to be good Samaritans in very deed; to share with our less fortunate neighbors, and in reality show love for our fellowmen. So He said, “Remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support . . . And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me.”⁸

An Illustration

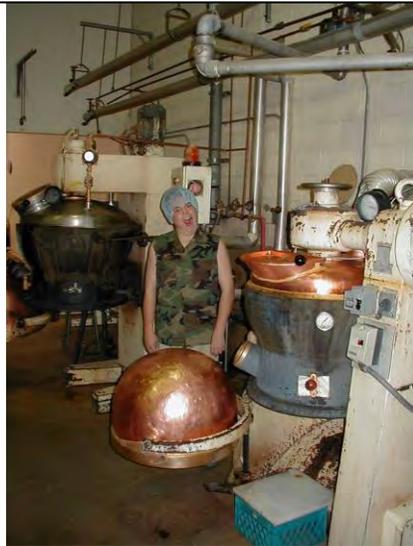
A while ago I took the some young men from Church to the Peppermint Place in Alpine, Utah. The owner of the store, Taz Murray, is a good friend and colleague of mine. Taz invited us to bring the young men aged 12–18 to his store so he could spend time talking with the young men about careers, potential jobs, and other topics, including marketing, finance, production, and human resources (see Picture 1).

Taz gave the young men instructions to put on their hairnets and shoe mitts to protect the production floor and products and took them to the various parts of the factory: the candy heaters (see Picture 2), the cutting machines, the drying racks (see Picture 3), and the packing tables (see Picture 4).

Picture 1. Introduction to Candy Making



Picture 2. Candy Heaters



The highlight of the trip came when Taz showed the young men the retail side of the candy store (see Pictures 5 and 6). Here he gave them instructions about what they should and should not do. He said the young men could eat any candy he made in his factory. Any candy or related products that he did not make in his factory were off-limits because he had to purchase them. Then he gave each of the young men a bag and said, “Fill them up.” He warned the youth that if they put things in their bags that were off-limits, they would be escorted outside until the other youth were done.

The youth had a great time. They were so excited. They filled their bags with gumdrops, chocolate-covered nuts and raisins, gumballs, gummy candies, and suckers (see Picture 7).

Picture 3 The Drying Rack



Picture 4. The Packing Tables



Picture 5. The Candy Store



As I have thought about the subject of giving, I have decided that life is like Taz Murray’s candy store. We each fill our own bags—our lives—with the experiences we have while here on earth. We have been given instructions by Heavenly Father as to what is good and what is bad, the commandments. If we choose wisely, we will be able to enjoy the good things in life. If we fail to choose wisely, we must reap the consequences of our actions. Interestingly, the more we share with others, the greater our joy will be later on.

Myths and Realities of Giving

There are five myths of giving that need to be recognized:

Myth 1. Giving Makes Us Poorer. While people who give to others may initially have less financially, giving really makes them richer in the long term. Givers are happier. Research has shown that happy people make more money, have better marriages, and contribute more to society. Givers are also healthier. Research has shown that when people are happier, they put less stress on their bodies and hence tend to live longer. Finally, leaders give. Research has shown that those who give are perceived to be leaders by those who observe.⁹

Myth 2. People Are Naturally Selfish. Selfishness is a learned behavior. Arthur Brooks said, “People are selfish, it’s true, but they’re not naturally selfish; people are unnaturally selfish. When we are our best selves, when we are in equilibrium, when we are where we’re supposed to

be cognitively, neuro-chemically, and spiritually, then we are giving people.”³

Picture 6. Youth Helping Themselves in the Candy Store



Picture 7. Youth in the Candy Store



Myth 3. Giving Is a Luxury. Giving is not a luxury. Brooks also said “[Giving is] a necessity—the first 10 percent, not the last 10 percent. And the reason is that if we want to be better, we have to give.”³

As Christians, we have been commanded to give, yet we know it is something we need to learn. “Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee.”¹⁰

Myth 4. If the Government would do its job correctly, We would not need to give. The purpose of giving is not just to help those in need, it is also to help us. We need to give as much as others need to receive. Remember the words of Mosiah, “When ye are in the service of your fellow beings, ye only in the service of your God.”¹¹

Brooks said, “The day the government takes over for you in your private charity is the day we become poorer, unhappier, and unhealthier. We must demand to take our place as givers and support the communities and people who need the services we can provide.”³

Myth 5. You Must Have Money to Give. Giving doesn’t depend on the checkbook but on the heart. What you do is more important than what you have. I believe that if you don’t learn to give when you are poor, it will be very difficult for you to give when you are rich.

While the myths are many and varied, the realities are far different.

Reality 1. We have been commanded to give. The prophet Jacob taught: “Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance.”¹²

Reality 2. Givers make more money. Research has shown when comparing similar people, ages, family size, religion, race, etc., giver’s make more money than non-givers (and that is statistically attributable to the gift). People who do volunteer work do better financially than non-volunteers. Even those who give blood do better than non-givers.¹³

Reality 3. Giving shows our Love for God. King Benjamin stated: “And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.”¹⁴

Sister Carol B. Thomas commented: “Sacrifice is an amazing principle. As we willingly give our time and talents and all that we possess, it becomes one of our truest forms of worship. It can develop within us a profound love for each other and our Savior, Jesus Christ.”¹⁵

Reality 4. Giving helps others. King Benjamin further counseled: “But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another. And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer of your substance unto him that standeth in need.”¹⁶

Reality 5. Giving helps us change to become more like Christ! Marion G. Romney taught: “The Lord doesn’t really need us to take care of the poor, but we need this experience; for it is only through our learning how to take care of each other that we develop within us the Christ-like love and disposition necessary to qualify us to return to his presence.”¹⁷

Reality 6. Giving helps us repay an un-payable debt. There is one final debt, a debt we can never repay. And while we can never repay the debt, we can try.

I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you. . . I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath. . . I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.¹⁸

Our recommendations for giving include:

- Be a Christian in word and deed
- Be a diligent full tithe-payer
- Be generous with fast offerings
- Be generous with other offerings
- Be generous by contributing to missionary work
- Be generous by blessing the poor with your help
- Look for other ways to share your resources and bless God’s children
- Share your resources anonymously with friends
- Share yourself along with your resources
- Bless your family/extended family with resources

Understand the Principles of Wise Giving

There is a different type of accounting done in heaven—not an accounting of dollars and cents, but an accounting of our capacity and willingness to give. Lynn G. Robbins said, “The truer measure of sacrifice is not so much what one gives to sacrifice as what one sacrifices to give.”¹⁹

The following are a few principles we should remember as we give:

- **1. Understand Yourself, Your Vision, Goals and budget.** What is your vision for giving? What would you like to accomplish? Make sure what you are planning to do is in the best long-term interest of those you love, and that you take care of your own needs first. What are your resources? We cannot become like our Savior without giving. “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”²⁰
- 2. Seek, receive and act on the Spirit’s guidance.** This includes seeking diligently through study and prayer, living worthy of the Spirit’s guidance, and then acting on it once it is received. God know things we do not. As we seek the Spirit diligently through study and prayer, live worthy of the Spirit’s guidance, and then act on it once it is received, we will be the most effective in our giving. For behold, again I say unto you

that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost, it will show unto you all things what ye should do.”²¹

3. We Are to Give Out of Love. We must give to those in need because we have a concern for their well-being and happiness. We should not give out of pride because we have abundance. We are to give out of gratitude for all God has done for us. Paul said, “And though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, if I have not love, it profits me nothing.”²²

4. We Are to Give Sacrificially. Joseph Smith taught, “A religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation.”²³ Giving should be a sacrifice where our pocketbooks show where our hearts really are.

C. S. Lewis wrote: “If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us, ... they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them.”²⁴

5. We Are to Give Wisely. We are to give wisely and within our capacity. King Benjamin gave the following counsel:

And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give. And see that all these things are done in wisdom and order; for it is not requisite that a man should run faster than he has strength. And again, it is expedient that he should be diligent, that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order.²⁵

6. We Are to Give of Our Abundance. As mentioned earlier, there is a different type of accounting done in heaven. Luke records:

And he [Christ] looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he also saw a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.²⁶

Robert D. Hales stated, “You have received much in your life; go forth and freely give in the service of our Lord and Savior. Have faith; the Lord knows where you are needed. The need is so great, brothers and sisters, and the laborers are so few.”²⁷

7. We Are to Give Freely According to What We Have Been Given. We are to give of our own free will. Alma counseled:

The people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not should be given. And thus they should impart of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul.²⁸

Finding Balance

As you work on giving, finding balance among doctrines, principles and application is important in helping you become better at giving. We have shared some ideas for principles, although I am sure you can find others that are important to you. Below are a few ideas for doctrines on which the principles are based. As you strive to increase your ability and effectiveness in giving, in addition to what you are learning, I recommend you study and ponder the doctrines and principles supporting giving.

<u>Principles</u>	<u>Doctrines</u>
Know yourself, your vision and goals	Identity
We should give as the Spirit directs	Obedience
We are to give out of love	Agency
We are to give sacrificially	Accountability
We are to give wisely	Gratitude/Agency
We are to give of abundance	Stewardship
We are to give freely	Stewardship

From Obedience to Consecration

Giving is not an activity to be checked off as part of a daily checklist; rather, it is part of a Christ-centered life. The key is what we become. As such, we are not just giving to help others; rather,

We are children of Christ (identity), living worthy of the Spirit (obedience), using the blessings that God has shared with us wisely (stewardship) to take care of our spouses and family (stewardship and accountability). Then using of our abundance, we help build the kingdom of God (Plan of Salvation) through loving, serving and helping our fellowman (accountability), to accomplish our personal missions and our individual and family vision and goals.

Understand How to give Effectively

To give effectively, we should follow correct principles. Principles I follow when choosing a charity are as follows:

- They help in harmony with my personal vision, goals and values.
- They help people both locally and worldwide and make the world a better place.

- They are effective in their use of “the widow’s mite.” These charities will make wise use of my funds and make sure most funds go to the recipients, not marketing and administrative expenses.

Outlining principles to follow when selecting a charity will help you ensure that you are making effective and wise donations.

I remember as a young college student, recently returned from a mission, teaching a lesson in church on the subject of fast offerings. Spencer W. Kimball said.

Sometimes we have been a bit penurious (stingy) and figured that we had for breakfast one egg and that cost so many cents and then we give that to the Lord. I think that when we are affluent . . . we should be very generous and give, instead of the amount we saved by our two meals of fasting, perhaps much, much more—ten times more where we are in a position to do it. I know there are some who couldn’t.”²⁹

When we consider charitable giving as a percent of income, we see some surprising data. The following statistics from 1991 depict the average amount individuals gave to charity, according to salary brackets:

Individuals earning \$20,000 to 30,000 gave \$1,207, or 4.8 percent.

Individuals earning \$30,000 to 40,000 gave \$1,318, or 3.8 percent.

Individuals earning \$50,000 to 100,000 gave \$1,837, or 2.5 percent.

Why did those who earned more money give half as much (in percentage terms) as those who made less? Why should our giving decrease as our blessings increase? Although the data is old, the trend has not changed much in the succeeding years.

The decision as to how much we should give should be made individually or as a family. C. S. Lewis made an interesting comment on this subject:

I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare . . . If our charities do not at all pinch or hamper us . . . they are too small. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them.³⁰

I thought “ten times nothing is still nothing” and decided to give 10 times the cost of that day’s meals. Later, when I got married, my wife and I decided to give fast and other offerings as a percentage of our income. I later went back, and found that the percentage we chose to give was the same percentage I had chosen while in college.

Since then, what has been helpful to my family has been the habit of giving in percentage terms rather than in dollar terms when trying to determine the amount we should give. For many people, paying tithing is easy but making other contributions is much harder. If you put your contributions in percentage terms, God will know that regardless of how great or how small your

financial blessings, the amount you give will always be the same. Remember, do not let your giving decline as your income increases. The amount you are able to give should increase over time. Gordon B. Hinckley commented:

You know, as I know, that when you pay your honest tithes and offerings, the windows of heaven are opened and blessings are showered down upon you. That which you give is never missed; it becomes not a sacrifice but an investment under the wondrous powers of the Almighty to bless you.³¹

My Personal Priorities

Although there are many wonderful charities, the last part of this chapter is an overview of my personal giving priorities. Please note that since I am a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, my giving tends toward this organization. Your giving will likely be the same and will largely be directed toward your church or synagogue. This list is not all inclusive, but it is provided as a good place to start.

1. Tithing. Tithing is my first priority. Tithing is a debt of thankfulness for all that the Lord has given me. God has given me everything—He is my most important creditor.

I firmly believe in the blessings of paying an honest tithe. Doctrine and Covenants teaches us the following, “Behold, now it is called today until the coming of the Son of Man, and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned at his coming.”³²

To me, tithing is not a sacrifice: it is an investment. As it has been humorously pointed out, “the returns are out of this world.”

2. Fast Offerings. Fast offerings are offerings given from the practice of fasting for 24 hours once each month and giving the money you would have paid for food to the Church to care for those in need. Fast offering is my second giving priority. I believe that fast offerings are a form of payment for the blessing of living on this earth. Paying these offerings is a covenantal obligation I made of my own free will and choice. Marion G. Romney made the following statement:

Caring for the poor is a covenantal obligation. It follows, then, that we look after our poor and distressed not only because it is convenient, or exciting, or socially acceptable; we should do it first and foremost in fulfillment of our covenant with the Lord that we will do so.³³

The Lord said, “And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken.”³⁴

Remember, at some point in the future, we will be accountable to Heavenly Father and

Jesus Christ regarding the way we have used our financial resources.

3. Latter-day Saint Charities (Humanitarian Services/Perpetual Education Fund).

Latter-day Saint Charities helps with humanitarian aid throughout the world, regardless of the recipient's religious orientation. They are among the first to help with natural and other disaster aid. The Perpetual Education Fund gives very low-cost loans to individuals to help with education expenses. With Latter-day Saint Charities and the Perpetual Education Fund (PEF), every penny of every dollar you give goes to those in need. Latter-day Saint Charities gives to everyone, whether they are Church members or not, and the PEF gives to returned missionaries from other countries to help them gain an education.

4. Ward, Stake, and Church-Wide Missionary Funds. I believe the Lord helps those who help missionaries who preach His gospel. I have found that when I am trying to help in the service of the Lord, through both personal, family, and financial efforts, not only are others' lives blessed but my life and the lives of my family are blessed as well.

5. Deseret Industries, Goodwill, and the Salvation Army. What better way is there to get rid of belongings that are still good than to allow someone else to use them? Give the best you have to offer to help the Lord's poor.

6. Other Charities. Other good charities include college annual funds, university scholarships, Boy Scouts of America, United Way, and Habitat for Humanity.

Understand and Create Your Giving Plan

As a final part of this class and textbook on personal finance, I recommend we all put together an individual or family Giving Plan. We have plans for insurance, budgets, investing, retirement, and estate planning, should we not also include plans for how we will give back and make the world a better place?

As you put together your Giving Plan, I would hope you would think through how you will give, both institutionally, which is through your Church and other institutional contributions, as well as personally, which entails more direct personal and family contributions and service. I believe both types of giving are important. As a final part of this plan, think through how you intend to teach your children to give, for your children learn from you, and unless you teach them, it may be difficult for them to learn.

Giving is an intensely personal act. As such, it is not reported to me nor handed in, but I do recommend that you develop your Giving Plan individually and with your spouse if married. Build it consistent with your Vision, Mission, and Values statement. Make it meaningful, because next to what we do with our families, this will likely be one of the most meaningful things we will do over our lifetime.

As you put it together, visualize how you will feel at the end of your life as you accomplish the things you are planning. Is this truly what you want to do? Then make this Plan part of your personal and family goals, and work toward them as hard as you do your other goals.

As I think of giving, I think of both institutional (or indirect) and personal/individual (or direct) giving.

Institutional giving is giving through Church, through organizations set up to do good, and to help and serve in times of emergency and need. It is indirect giving, but giving none-the-less. This giving to me is giving of tithes, fast and other offerings, supporting missionaries, supporting 501(c)(3) organizations, helping financially in emergency situations, and helping financially with local food kitchens and other good causes.

Personal giving is giving directly to those in need, which includes personal and family contributions and service. This includes helping families in need, helping my friends, helping at Christmas time with Christmas giving, quarterly family service projects, helping at soup kitchens and other food drives, donating time at local genealogy libraries to find ancestors, participating in Church pageants and other faith-building activities, and providing service in local congregations and scout troops to help youth.

As you notice, it is important that we give both institutionally and personally. I like to think that whereas most goals are what you want to accomplish, giving is what you want to give back. I recommend you talk this over with your spouse and children. Help get them engaged and involved in the things you are doing to give back. Try to make this Giving Plan the culmination of your Personal Finance Plan. Use it to tie in your goals and values with your actions and efforts you are willing to give. Then finally, include in it how you will teach your children to give.

Institutional Giving Examples. Following are a few ideas shared by other students and faculty on institutional giving.

- We will pay our tithing of 10%, with additional contributions to Fast Offering of _% and the Ward Missionary Fund of _%.
- We will help support our own children as missionaries and will set apart \$___ each year to help other missionaries not as fortunate.
- We will give blood twice a year.
- We will go on a senior mission at age 65.
- We will participate in the _____ Pageant if and when accepted. We will apply every other year.
- We will work at the Genealogy Library or do indexing for two hours each week.

Personal Giving Examples. Following are a few ideas for personal giving.

- We will set apart \$___ each Christmas and work with our children to help a family who is in need.

- Each Christmas we will prepare “homeless bags” of food, clothing, and change to give to those in need.
- We will set aside \$____ each year to give back to BYU and other Church schools.
- We have set a goal to save \$___ for a school scholarship to allow others who are not as fortunate go to school.
- We will have a “Family Service Saturday” four times a year where we will go and do service for others, i.e., food kitchens, school work days, etc.

Giving Plan Example

Family giving plans are as individual as the families putting them together. The key is to catch your vision, set goals with the Lord’s help and then to do it. Here are a few ideas in each of the areas.

Vision

- This is likely from your Plan for Life. Other ideas include:
 - We will have made giving an important part of our lives, budgets and characters. It is through serving and giving that our children will know what we truly believe and that we are truly Christians.
 - We will be “Christ’s hands” wherever we live, and will strive through our service to have “His image” in our countenances.³⁵
 - Many missionaries and friends who could not have served or done without our help will be there to express appreciation for the help we gave.
 - We will have kept the faith and our covenants.

Goals

- We will be generous in giving back to God in terms of our time, talents and resources since it is all His anyway.
- We have and follow our plans for institutional, personal, individual and family giving.
- We will teach our children to give through both word and example, in serving others and family service projects.
- We will serve in our local congregations in whatever way we are needed.
- Our resources will be God’s resources in our family and other service projects.

Plans and Strategies

- We will be observant and listen to the Spirit for opportunities to help and serve.
- We will do a family service project quarterly, and will help out with all Young Men and Women service projects.
- We will attend the temple each week, and will spend 1-2 hours a week doing genealogy or indexing
- We will give blood as often as we can

- We will create a “Family Foundation,” where children are all board members, and we distribute 5% of the assets each year to needy people.
- We will serve formally in the temple beginning at age 60.
- We will go on our first senior mission at age 65.
- Institutionally, We will pay annually 10% tithing, __% for fast offering, __% for missionary work and __% to our favorite college for scholarships.
- Personally, We will set aside \$ ____ a month to help others.
- We will have a family personal giving budget and will involve the children in deciding its use
- We will teach children about finance through our Family Foundation

Constraints

- Key constraints are living on a budget and saving 20% of every paycheck, with 15% going to retirement and __% earmarked for personal giving.
- On personal giving, our family will jointly decide who we will help, how much, and how that help will be given, as well as the service projects each quarter.
- Institutional giving will come directly from our paycheck each month for tithes and other offerings.
- Sin will be a big constraint, so we need to always keep our promises and covenants.

Accountability

- We will share our vision and goals with Heavenly Father in prayer each day
- My accountability partners will be my spouse and children.
- We will discuss as a family our giving plans in Family Home Evening (a weekly meeting of the family to teach and have fun together).
- We will also discuss and schedule our quarterly family service projects.
- Moreover, we will also discuss the criteria as a family on who we will help with our personal giving, how much we will give (which will change depending on the situation) and the process of giving.
- I will be held accountable for this giving by my spouse and children.

Summary

We all wrestle with learning to give. This chapter discusses our covenantal obligations to share with others. Any discussion on giving takes us back to the first chapter of this course, where we discussed the four key principles of personal finance: ownership, stewardship, agency, and accountability. An important part of learning to give is developing an understanding of these four principles.

There are five myths of giving that are incorrect:

- Giving makes us poorer. Those who give are happier and healthier and are considered leaders by others.

- People are naturally selfish. Selfishness is a learned behavior. When we are at our best in all our faculties, we are givers.
- Giving is a luxury. Giving is a necessity. We need to give to be the best people we can be and to become more like our Savior Jesus Christ.
- The government provides assistance, so we do not need to give. We must take our place as givers and support the communities and people who need the services we can provide. We need it as much as they do.
- You need money to give. Giving is a state of your heart, not a state of your checkbook.

The realities of giving are:

- We have been commanded to give.
- Givers make more money.
- Giving shows our love for God.
- Giving helps others.
- Giving helps us change to become more like Christ.
- Giving helps us repay an unrepayable debt.

Much is written in the scriptures about money and giving. A number of parables in Matthew and Luke illustrate the principles Jesus taught about material wealth during his earthly ministry.

There is a different type of accounting done in heaven—not an accounting of dollars and cents but an accounting of our capacity and willingness to give.

Finally, just as we have a vision and goals for what we want to accomplish, we should have a vision and goals for what we want to give. It is important for us to “learn to give” and to prepare our individual/family “Giving Plan.”

Remember we each fill our lives with our experiences. We have been given instructions as to what is good and what is bad. If we choose wisely, we will be able to enjoy the good things in life. If we fail to choose wisely, we must reap the consequences of our actions. The more we share with others, the greater our joy will be later on.

Assignments

Financial Plan Assignments

Your financial plan is not complete until you have determined the ways in which you are going to share your blessings with others. How well are you using your resources in your families to help build the kingdom? What goals will you set regarding how you will bless the lives of those around you? Think about the goals you wrote down in an earlier chapter, particularly in response to the question, “What does Heavenly Father want me to do or to be?” What can you do to achieve these goals?

Think about your family/individual Giving Plan. Please note that this is not to be handed in now but to be included in your PFP after it is returned. Include your vision, goals and plans on your personal and family “giving plan.” How will you handle both your institutional (through Church and other institutional contributions) and personal (individual and family contributions and service) giving?

Develop your Action Plan. What is your giving plan for tithes, offerings, and other contributions? What is your giving plan for door-to-door, phone, and other solicitors? How will you teach your children to give?

Learning Tools

The following Learning Tool may be helpful to you as you learn to give:

[Tithing Share Transfer](#) (LT08)

This document is an example of a form you can use to pay your tithes and other offerings with appreciated stocks or mutual funds.

Review Materials

Terminology Review

Family Giving Plan. A family plan which states how the family will give, to whom it will give to, as well as what the family will or will not do or give to.

Giving Plan. A plan on your thoughts on your personal and family giving. It discusses how you will handle both your institutional (through Church and other institutional contributions) and personal (personal and family contributions and service) giving.

www.charitynavigator.org, a website on information about various charities which file Form 990 with the IRS. However, they do not include religious organizations listed as “church or convention or association of churches” which are exempt from filing Form 990.

Review Questions

1. Learning to give takes us back to the doctrines and principles of finance. What are the key doctrines of finance from the different perspectives, and the key principles of finance?
2. A large majority of the parables in the New Testament are related to what topic?
3. What are at least five different reasons for giving?
4. Based on the quote from C. S. Lewis, what is the only safe rule of giving?
5. When you give to charities, it is important to give wisely and to know where that money is going. What are two resources you can use to learn more about different charities?

¹ D&C 88:132.

² “Honesty, a Principle of Salvation,” Ensign, Dec. 1971, 72.

- ³ D&C 82:3.
⁴ Luke 12:48.
⁵ D&C 105:3.
⁶ Monson, Thomas S. “A Gift Remembered,” *New Era*, Dec. 2001, 4
⁷ D&C 88:123.
⁸ Honesty, a Principle of Salvation,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1971, 72.
⁹ Brooks, Arthur C. “Why Giving Matters,” *BYU Magazine*, Summer 2009, 25–28
¹⁰ Deut. 16:17
¹¹ Mosiah 2:17
¹² Jacob 2:17.
¹³ Arthur C. Brooks, “Why Giving Matters,” *BYU Magazine*, p. 25-28, Summer 2009.
¹⁴ Mosiah 2:17.
¹⁵ “Sacrifice: An Eternal Investment,” *Ensign*, May 2001, 63.
¹⁶ Mosiah 4:16-17.
¹⁷ “Living Welfare Principles,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 92; emphasis in original.
¹⁸ Mosiah 2:20-21.
¹⁹ Robbins, Lynn G. “Tithing—a Commandment Even for the Destitute.” *Ensign*, May 2005, 34
²⁰ Matt 25:20.
²¹ 2 Nephi 32:5.
²² 1 Corinthians 13:3
²³ *Lectures on Faith*, comp. N. B. Lundwall, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, n.d., 58
²⁴ *Mere Christianity* [1952], 67.
²⁵ Mosiah 4:24, 27
²⁶ Luke 21:1–4
²⁷ Hales, Robert D. “Couple Missionaries: A Time to Serve.” *Ensign*. May 2001, 27
²⁸ Mosiah 18:27–28
²⁹ In Conference Report, April 1974, p. 184.
³⁰ *Mere Christianity*, 1952, 67
³¹ *Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley*, Vol. 2, Intellectual Reserve, 2005, 330
³² D&C 64:23.
³³ Romney, Marion, G. Caring for the Poor—A Covenantal Obligation,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1978, 87
³⁴ D&C 42:30.
³⁵ Alma 5:14.