

King David Made the First Planned Gift

The Bible contains many stories of love and generosity: *and it also records a planned gift.*

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earth and then at our death for generations who come behind us.

The story is told in *I Chronicles 22 and 28*. God would not allow King David to build his Temple, but told him that his son Solomon would build it after David's death. In anticipation of this great construction project, David accumulated immense quantities of gold, silver, bronze, precious stones and exotic woods. He then *bequeathed* these assets to his son Solomon, along with God's plans and instructions for the design of the Temple (even in Bible times, it seems, donors could be somewhat demanding about how they wanted their planned gifts used...). The result was a Temple of such magnificence that none has been built since to compare it to.

When King David prepared his will and dedicated these assets and plans for building the Temple, he prayed, "But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Every thing comes from you and we have given you only what comes from your hand ... all of this abundance we have provided for building you a Temple for your Holy Name, comes from your hand, and it all belongs to you." (*I Chron. 29: 14 & 16*)

This prayer of David sets the chief biblical principle for all philanthropy. Since we are God's creation, and all we have comes from Him, anything we "own" really belongs to Him. Our philanthropy then becomes a *stewardship* of giving a portion back for whatever good we are led to support, both during our days of life on



The Bible is full of teachings about accumulating wealth, caring for the poor and needy, providing for our families, and giving to God's service for both secular and spiritual purposes. Jesus in the New Testament had much to say about giving. There is his parable of the rich man who accumulated great wealth for selfish reasons, and lost it all when he died (*Luke 12:16-21*). Jesus proclaims the truth that we cannot take our wealth with us when we die, and it is so much better to use that wealth for the benefit of others rather than ourselves. In this way we become "rich in spirit" Jesus says.

Jesus said that "it is better to give than to receive." I have seen this truth demonstrate itself many times in people I know and in my own life. The satisfaction we receive in return for our philanthropy greatly outweighs the gifts given.

The Apostle Paul, in his writings in the second letter to the Corinthian congregation, encourages generous giving. Generous giving reaps generous blessings in return, and Paul teaches that, "God loves a cheerful giver" (*II Cor. 9: 6-8*). The joy of giving leads to greater self esteem, better health and a longer life. This *truth* is backed by many legitimate scientific studies.

Americans are probably among the most generous people on earth. Philanthropic giving is a multi-billion dollar enterprise in the United States.

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However, we only give approximately 2% of our wealth for charitable purposes both while alive and at death. Yet the scriptures teach we should give 10% (*Leviticus 27:30*). In 2007 over \$300 billion was contributed by Americans for philanthropy (including religious giving). Yet the gross domestic product (GNP) for the same year was \$13.8 trillion. If we had instead given 10% of our income and estates that year, that could interpret into \$1.38 trillion for philanthropy. Just imagine what good could have been accomplished if we had followed this principle of giving.

Let's live the principle of generous giving that the Bible teaches — we cannot out-give God. A generous “sower” reaps so much more in return for what he has given.



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