

## Money Managers Pt. 5, Investing in Your Local Church, 10/8/17

If you are just joining us this Sunday, maybe visiting or you have been out of town we are finishing a series called Money Managers, getting a Biblical Perspective of the resource of money.

Week 1: God owns everything, we manage it, we are responsible.

Week 2- Where our treasure is, that's where our heart will be also.

Week 3: That we have been blessed so that we would be a blessing to others in need.

Week 4: How do we develop a plan for managing our money? Principle of the firsts. Prioritize giving to God and he will provide.

Today there are two more areas of biblical stewardship that I'd like to address- the **DESTINATION: Where should we give? DUTY: What is the responsibility of the church in receiving financial gifts.**

Let's first talk about the destination of our giving. I get the question fairly often, "Should I give to my local church or is it OK to redirect my tithes/offerings to other ministries?" There are many great para-church ministries and causes to give to aren't there? Ministries caring for the poor, the sick, the disabled, missionaries, sponsorship of children, disaster relief. And this isn't just a question giving, this is questions for our time, talents and treasures...our resources.

There is no Scriptural mandate that a certain amount or percentage of your giving has to go to your church. However, I'd like to share with you **3 reasons why I believe we should consider giving first to our local church.** Of course, this is going to feel a bit biased since I'm a pastor of a local church. However, the reasons I believe that we should invest the first of our time, talents and treasures is not BECAUSE I am a pastor, but rather these reasons I'm going to share are why I decided to dedicate my life to church ministry. Why should we consider investing first in the church?

### 1) Tithing pattern in Old and New Testament

**Old Testament Pattern-** The tithe "first tenth" went to God's Institution, the Temple. The tithe went to the Levites who served in the temple, administering the sacrifices (**Numbers 18:21**) and the general costs of temple upkeep. Other offerings over and above that went to giving to the poor, feasts and celebrations, etc.

**New Testament Pattern-** Firstfruits goes to God's New Institution, the Local Church. We see one example of this in **Acts 4:32-37** that the church members were giving and laying it at the feet of those appointed as leaders (the apostles) and they were distributing according to the mission and needs of their church family. And this was the pattern of not only the 1<sup>st</sup> century church but became the practice throughout much of church history.

### 2) The Church is God's "Plan A"

Matthew 16:18

*And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.*

Ephesians 3:10-11

*So that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Bill Hybels: *The hope of the world is not government, academia, business, but the church because it is to the church that God has entrusted the message of salvation, which truly changes people's lives and hearts.*

Great commission in Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8- was not an individual, Rambo mission. And it wasn't even just a mission for a small team of spiritually elite Navy Seals. It was a mission that is strategically designed to be lived out among the local church in specific locations to make disciples of their families and neighborhoods. Pattern throughout Acts- gospel would be shared, churches planted, people sent. This is exactly where we get our mission of BVBC to introduce people to Jesus Christ (evangelism) and help them follow Him (discipleship). Because the church is God's Plan A is why we are compelled to become a LIGHTHOUSE so the lost and broken can KNOW Christ. To be a GREENHOUSE so that believers can GROW in Christ and learn how to walk by faith. To be a POWERHOUSE so that disciples can GO with Christ, serving and sharing their faith. It's the vehicle through which we are to identify needs, care for the poor, feed the hungry, disciple and equip people to minister in the community, and send people out to the nations. When we give to the local church, we give to the central institution for the mission of God. The church is PLAN A, and there isn't a PLAN B! This is why 12 years ago I wanted to my resources to this plan my time, talents and treasures.

Now I think it's important to note, I think it's great to give to other ministries and causes, to serve and give your time. Shannan and I sponsor a compassion child, several missionaries, a specific church ministry in Kenya, youth missions trips, and a variety of other one-off or non-profit ministries. But the first fruits of our giving and serving go back to BVBC. Everything else is an extension of the ministry of the local church.

### **3) Giving to the Church as an Investment**

#### **Investment in your church is an investment in your family**

This is very personal to me because back in 1975 Ken and Linda Keeler came to faith in Christ through the ministry of a local church- Harleysville Bible Fellowship, college ministry. That church helped disciple my parents, teach them how to have a healthy marriage, supported my dad to pursue Bible education, taught them how to be Christian parents so that I was raised in a household where I could hear the

gospel and see it lived out through them. That is the story for many of you here. The majority of people who come to Christ come through a family member.

-So when you give you are investing in the discipleship of your own family, but also the families of your spiritual brothers and sisters here. This is why we are doubling down on ministry to help couples have thriving, gospel-centered marriages and families, to help broken marriages find hope and help- for the sake of their children and future generations to know Christ! Much more to come...Classes, Small Groups, biblical teaching, mentoring. **Marriage Workshop.**

-When you give you to the local church are investing in the discipleship of children and teens, hearing the gospel, teaching them about a relationship with Jesus, memorizing Scripture through Awana, providing a counter-cultural environment and friendships to reinforce their faith in a difficult world. When we give we are investing in a spiritual family tree...the next generation, the future leaders of our community and around the world.

-When you give you are investing in your own discipleship. Providing a place of ministry and service for you to grow and use your gifts, where lifelong, vital friendships and support can be received when life gets difficult and you are tempted toward doubt, fear, anger, deception. Where you can learn to walk by the Spirit as you grow in knowledge and obedience to God's Word through small groups, Christian Ed classes.

### **Investment in your church is an investment in your neighborhood.**

God has called us to be a lighthouse to the Brandywine Valley. When you give to the local church you are investing in your friends and family members who don't know Christ, who can come and hear the gospel through local outreach events, ministries and services. We have had 15 baptisms so far this year, many who have come to Christ, rededicated through the ministry of BVBC. We have had about a 100 new people come to Pizza with the Pastors so far this year, many of them came because they were invited by someone. Y partnership, VBS #s , One4Wilmington Partnership- **Prayer Walk Oct. 29<sup>th</sup>** at Starting Cool Spring Park, Rodney Square, The City Church of Wilmington, 4-6pm. Future- struggling with addictions, developing greater partnerships with ministries for outreach.

### **-Investment in your church is an investment in the nations**

- We have a strong legacy of sending and supporting missionaries at BVBC. We will continue the legacy. 29 Current missionary families in the states and abroad in addition to 11 who are retired.

-Global Media Outreach-Pattie Harris and a team of a dozen or more people

-SALT

-Youth Trips

-ESL

So to recap- Why am I calling us to consider giving first to the local church?

**1) Tithe pattern in Old and New Testament**

**2) The Church is God's "Plan A"**

**3) Giving as an Investment in your family, neighborhood and the nations**

I'd like to take moment before you go any further and say a few words of encouragement to so many of you who give toward BVBC. God has provided through so many of you who have been faithful givers, generous and joyful givers. We have some who have very little in the world's eyes, who live on a fixed income and still give faithfully and generously. Many of you have sacrificially given toward capital campaigns in the past so that we could worship in a sanctuary like this, so we could have the space for all the wonderful ministries reaching so many people...this building is being utilized virtually every day and night. So first, on behalf of all of our past and present leadership- let me say "Thank you."

And because we have been entrusted with your generous financial gifts we have a solemn responsibility. **1 Corinthians 4:2 *Those who have been given a stewardship must be proven faithful.***

Guess what? Everything we've preached in this series applies not only to you as individuals but to us as a church. We have responsibility before God to be good managers of what he has provided for us. And so, going forward this series will influence and guide how we manage and prioritize our church budget, utilize facilities, making important decisions.

I want to share with you some ways that the leadership of BVBC is striving toward faithful, biblical stewardship. We are in the middle of this discovery, discussion, prayer and planning right now...but there are a few things that are crystal clear to us that I can share.

**1) We are committed to financial transparency.**

- Congregational meetings budget- clearly and with detail, share exactly where and how we plan to use funds that are given. Brandon Ontjes and the Finance Committee did a fantastic job of that in the Spring.
- Report on the status of our debt, giving and budget in the bulletin.
- Stewardship Team- cross section of church to receive candid input into how to we can best pursue and communicate financial matters to the church.
- Commitment to learning from the past.

**2) We are committed to the "Money Managers" principles.**

Everything we have called us to do as individuals we are committed to do corporately.

- Biblical Priorities of Discipleship, Evangelism, Caring for the "least of these"
- Church should be giving generously
- Accounting, Knowing where our money is going
- Avoiding excess

-Debt should be dealt with aggressively, 4 million.

I want you to know this isn't just in theory- we were tested in this just this past month. Property next door. Forced to make decision, move fast...could we use it? Absolutely! Conventional wisdom buy it! Good credit, reserves...came down to our core beliefs. Deacon board aligned to say no.

We believe we are at a very strategic time in the life of BVBC. Next few years will shape the future of our church. I'm thrilled to be a part of it and I want to call you to be all-in with us!

Commitment Card