



# How Can I Give?

In his book *Generous Living*, financial expert Ron Blue makes this bold statement: "If I could boil down everything I have ever learned into one sentence or thought, it would be this: Generosity and financial freedom are inextricably linked." He goes on to say, "The folks who enjoy genuine freedom and joy are those who give the most, relative to their incomes."

Most of us do have a heart to give but often find that there isn't any extra money left over after taking care of bills and other immediate needs. The truth is, no matter how good our intentions are they won't translate into reality if our approach to giving is haphazard. But with a little organization – and a Giving Plan – you could be giving more than you ever thought possible.

## You need a plan

A Giving Plan incorporates your unique vision, enables you to set and evaluate giving goals, helps you monitor your progress, and provides a handy record so you get credit for all your donations when tax time rolls around.

1. **Establish your giving goal.** This is the amount of money you intend to earmark for giving. Build this number into your annual budget if you have one. Make it a realistic target that you feel certain you can reach. A common figure is 10% of annual income. If that isn't possible, start smaller and increase the amount over time.
2. **Select the recipients of your giving.** This step is the heart of the Giving Plan because it involves your passions and values. As a believer, your first area of responsibility is to your church. Leave a small chunk of your goal unbudgeted and you will have the freedom to respond to unanticipated giving opportunities.
3. **Create a Giving Plan chart.** The chart functions as the skeleton of the plan, giving it structure. In the first column, list the organizations you have decided to support.

4. **Create a file for your giving records.** Keep all your paperwork in one place. Include a printout of the Giving Plan chart, solicitations from organizations you plan to support or want to consider, and the receipts you will need to document your gifts for tax purposes.
5. **Review your Giving Plan on a monthly basis.** This step serves as the muscle of the Giving Plan, pushing you toward your giving goals. You may find it helpful to take your annual goal and divide it by twelve to establish a monthly goal. The best approach is to do your monthly giving first, then set aside your savings, and after that start spending the remainder. Making your planned gifts each month will affect your perspective towards money and reinforce giving as a priority.
6. **Finalize your Giving Plan in December and revise it for the new year.** In early December, check your status on the giving chart so you can take final steps to fulfill your goals. Take some time to carefully and prayerfully evaluate your commitments, and establish your goals for the coming year.

As in any other money-management endeavor, good planning will help you achieve your giving goals. A thoughtfully prepared Giving Plan will help you to become more strategic and organized. But let your giving come straight from the heart. As we share our blessings with others, we develop a spirit of generosity that allows us to delight in our financial progress – not just for the ways that it benefits us, but for the ways we can use it to benefit God and His kingdom.



## RELATED SCRIPTURE

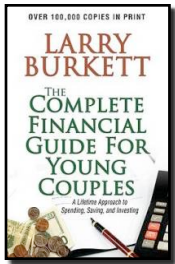
The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is slave to the lender (Proverbs 22:7).

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to

overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine (Proverbs 3:9-10).

Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it (Malachi 3:10).

## RELATED RESOURCES

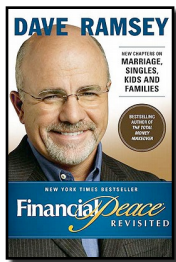


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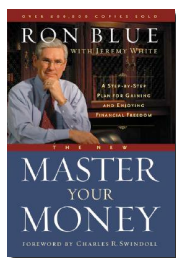


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