

Down Home Thoughts – Again.

Every now and then I have to get back to my North Louisiana piney woods upbringing. I shared these down home thoughts on giving a few years back and they still haven't gone outa style.

Another year's winding down and it's time to be reminded of a few basic ideas on giving to support your church or other ministry that God's plucking your heart strings over. Let's jump right in:

- 1) **Give.** Yep, that's pretty elementary but in this day and age it doesn't hurt to be reminded. Times might be tough for you but when I look in God's Holy Word, I don't see exceptions to giving, even being poor. In 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 Paul tells about the dirt po' Macedonians who begged him to take their gift so they could help Believers who were really hurtin'. In verse 9 Paul says Jesus was rich but became poor so we might be rich. So now you're rich and you ain't got no excuse. **Just give!**
- 2) **Plan.** Most gifts don't happen because of... NO PLANNING. Like most things in life, you gotta think about it first. Sit down with your significant other - wife, husband, favorite hunting dog - but no cats - and take a look at how God has laid blessings on your doorstep. (Might want to stop and thank Him while you're at it.) If you need help working out a plan that legally gives the IRS a good ol' Cajun jeer, call the Louisiana Baptist Foundation. We'll drink coffee at our place or sit at your kitchen table to discuss a gift that uses your Will or some form of trust to bless others way past your lifetime. Don't forget to remember: **Prior Proper Planning Prevents Poor Performance.**
- 3) **Find the right place.** No brainer, right? Not necessarily. First let's make it clear we're talkin'bout gifts above the tithe here. We are blessed beyond measure by God's love; we oughta give so others can be blessed the same. Find a ministry that's pointin' people to Jesus. Where, you ask? Open your eyes! Might even consider praying about it. Most likely you're already knee-deep in a church or ministry so **Give where your heart is already.**
- 4) **Find the right stuff.** We say it over and over again: **cash** ain't always the best way to give. Sometimes you need your cash for other things, like paying the light bill. You might have some other stuff that would work just as well (or better) without puttin' a hole in your monthly budget. A lot of these assets like stock, mutual funds, or real estate have the added bonus of knockin' off (legally, of course) the IRS capital gains taxes. You can give it now or you can use some of the above mentioned property to create a "deferred gift" that happens later.
- 5) **Review.** Some of you folks out there reading this, or having it read to you, have already done a pretty good job of giving and making plans to give. It sure don't hurt to take a look at your plans every now and again to make sure they're doing what you intended. Life can throw you a "low, hanging curve ball" sometimes, but if you've planned well and kept your plans up to date you can still "knock it outa the park" instead of "hittin' a dribbler down to first base."

Pray, plan, give and review. Good keys to giving anytime.

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