

King David Made the First Planned Gift

By Jerry Rohrbach, CFRE, ChFC
with Viken Mikaelian

As you know, the Bible has a lot to say about money and generosity. But did you know it also records a planned gift?

A Bequest to Build a Temple

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 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.

A Last Will & Testament in 970 BC

When King David prepared his BC equivalent of a will and dedicated 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? Everything 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).

What Does Biblical Philanthropy Look Like?

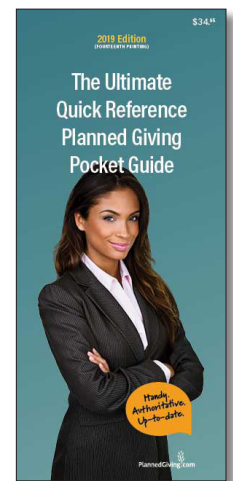
David's prayer sets the chief biblical principle for all philanthropy. Since we are God's creation, and all we have comes from him, anything we "own" really belongs to him. Our philanthropy then becomes a stewardship of giving back, during our days of life on earth and then at our death for generations who come behind us.

You Can't Take It With You

The Bible is full of teachings about wealth, caring for the poor and needy, providing for our families, and giving to God's service for both secular and spiritual purposes. Jesus had a lot to say about giving in the New Testament. You've probably heard his parable about the rich man who accumulated great wealth for selfish reason—and then lost it all when he died (Luke 12:16- 21).



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Jesus proclaimed the truth that we cannot take our wealth with us when we die, so it's better to use that wealth to benefit of others rather than ourselves. In this way, Jesus said, we become "rich in spirit."

Better to Give than to Receive

Perhaps nearly everyone is familiar with these words of Jesus: "It is better to give than to receive." You've probably experienced the truth of this in your own life and seen it in others. The satisfaction we receive in return for our philanthropy greatly outweighs the gifts given.

The Apostle Paul, in his second letter to the Corinthian congregation, encourages generous giving because it reaps generous blessings in return and because "God loves a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9: 6-8). What Paul didn't say but we now know, backed by multiple scientific studies, is that the joy of giving leads to greater self esteem, better health and a longer life.

The Most Generous People on the Planet

Americans are probably among the most generous people on earth. Philanthropic giving is a multibillion dollar en-

terprise in the United States. However, we only give approximately two percent of our wealth for charitable purposes, both while alive and at death. That's quite a bit short from the 10 percent the scriptures teach we should give (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 given 10 percent of our income and estates that year, that could interpret into \$1.38 trillion for philanthropy. Just imagine all the good that could have been accomplished and all the joy returned to the givers if we had followed this principle of giving!

Let's follow the example of King David, the teachings of Jesus, and the advice backed by modern science—and let's give generously.

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