

Additional Ways to Grow in Your Giving

You might be wondering, “I want to go *All In* and be used by God for this initiative, but money is tight and I’m not sure how to make it work.”

Or, you might be thinking, “I want to grow in my giving. But I feel stuck with our household’s current needs and outlook on spending.”

These are real and valid concerns. However, God always gives us enough to be generous. Sometimes, it just takes a bit of creativity and intentionality on our part. Here are some ideas for how to go *All In* and commit to a lifestyle of sacrificial generosity.

No, this will not be easy. And yes, sacrificial generosity might hurt a bit. That’s actually a sign that God is working in your heart! In 2 Samuel 24:24, King David said, **“I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”** David understood that if a gift is going to touch the heart of God, it must first touch the heart of the giver! The more costly and sacrificial the gift, the greater the value in God’s eyes (Mark 12:41-44).

Here are three key steps to intentionally create room for generosity in your life:

1

Reassess your lifestyle

What does your lifestyle communicate about your faith? Are you truly giving God your first and your best?

2

Rearrange your priorities

Does your living and spending govern your giving, or does your giving guide your spending and living? What could you cut, simplify, or scale back to be more generous?

3

Reallocate your resources

What do your current spending and saving habits say about your relationship with God? What are you investing in?

Here are eight practical ideas to help you fulfill those three actions and create more room for generosity in your life:

1

Practice priority budgeting

Many families will choose to rearrange their priorities and give up something in their current budget to give more to a generosity initiative. Priority budgeting may mean postponing a planned expenditure such as a new car, vacation, home remodeling or other major purchase.

2

Redirect present expenditures

Often, families have significant short-term expenditures for special needs. One example is the large expenditure a family incurs for a child to attend college. A family might realize that their son or daughter will be graduating from college during the two years of the generosity initiative and, as a result, they would be able to increase their commitment the second year of the campaign by thousands of dollars by giving what they had been spending on their child's tuition. Another example would be the cash flow that would be freed up when a loan is paid.

3

Increased giving with increased income

Some people receive periodic increases in salary or bonuses from their employers. The temptation for many of us is to increase our lifestyle to fit the higher income. In many instances, families have decided they will commit the full amount of salary increases.

4

Give from your excess

One young man in another church decided that giving up two of his collectors' baseball cards worth over \$20,000 would be the best means of sacrifice for his family. Another couple had saved \$80,000 to build a lake cabin. When their church entered a generosity initiative, they decided the needs of the church were greater than their need for a second home.

5

Commit unexpected cash

Often, people pray for God to show them a way they can give beyond what they can presently see or afford. Sometimes, the answers come unexpectedly. One couple had been praying for weeks about their commitment to the church generosity initiative. Much to their surprise, they received an inheritance of several thousand dollars. They gave this amount to their church as part of their two-year commitment, in addition to a commitment from their regular income.

6

Sacrifice your extra time

Some family members have extra time so they secure a part-time job to be able to give more to the church. This is particularly true for families whose children are grown and away from home and for semi-retired or retired couples. A man was in the process of retiring when his church entered a campaign. He and his wife secured new jobs and gave the first two years of their retirement income to the generosity initiative.

7

Donate appreciated assets (stored resources)

Many people own stocks that are worth significantly more than the original purchase price. That is good news. The bad news is that if these stocks are sold, a significant portion of the gain would be lost to taxation. Gifts of appreciated assets – typically investment securities or real estate – can be very advantageous to both the donor and to the church. By transferring ownership of the asset to the church, the donor avoids capital gains taxes on the sale of the asset. In addition, the donor receives an income tax charitable deduction for the full market value of the asset. That, in effect, makes these gifts less costly to make.

8

Consider the Charitable IRA

In 2015, Congress enacted a permanent extension of the IRA charitable rollover. As a result, individuals age 70½ or older can make gifts directly from their IRA to charity. An IRA charitable rollover is a wonderful way you can help continue our work and also receive a tax benefit this year. Benefits of an IRA charitable rollover include:

- Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to Plainfield Christian Church.
- Satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year.
- Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions.
- Make a gift that is not subject to the 60% deduction limits on charitable gifts.

A Final Encouragement

Giving does not have to be in equal increments during the two-year campaign. You might be able to give more in the second year than in the first. As you think about your financial commitment to *All In*, think not just of your potential to give right now, but also of your potential to give in the future. It might be that you can make a two-year commitment in which 30-40% is given in the first year, and 60-70% is given in the second year.

Finally, as you consider your financial commitment to the Lord's work, you might want to consider estate planning. Have you proactively made provision for God and your church in your will (or trust) and estate planning? Now is a good time to do that. It might be as simple as including a provision in your will or trust that 10 percent of the value of your estate will be donated to the church at the time of your passing. Or, it could involve a planned gift such as a charitable remainder trust. While such gifts do not provide immediate financial benefit to a generosity initiative, they are marvelous gifts of faith commitment to carry on the work of the church for future generations. We partner with an organization called Financial Planning Ministry (fpm.org) that provides free consultation and estate planning work to help you leverage what God has given you to continue to make an impact for many years to come.