

The
Stewardship
JOURNAL

January 25, 2021

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Our Executive Director

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Does \$142 Say I Love You?

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From the Desk of Our Executive Director

"How long has it been since you preached a series on stewardship?" That is the question I ask in my **Missionary Musings** post. Churches that regularly hear sermons on biblical stewardship always raise more money. In this edition of *The Stewardship Journal*, we are honored to have an interview I conducted with Dr. Ronnie Floyd about his new book called *Ten Percent: A Call to Biblical Stewardship*. His book has six sermons with six corresponding lessons that the Executive Committee of the SBC has provided to anyone for free. I believe you will enjoy the words of wisdom on preaching on stewardship from Dr. Floyd.

Now, here is a preview of what else you can expect in the pages that follow.

My friend, Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, has been sharing with us on building a stewardship platform for your church. This week he gives an overview of what is ahead in his post entitled *The Key Lanes for Increasing Giving*.

Bonus Section. Mark always provides practical advice, not simply theoretical advice. In this week's Bonus Section, you will find a sample giving statement letter.

Finally, we believe that the offering is worship, and it deserves to be planned out like the rest of your order of service. Each week, we provide you with an offering talk to help your members' worship experience. Today's is entitled, *Does \$142 Say I Love You?* It is a good talk, given we are weeks away from Valentine's Day.

We are thrilled with the response you have given us thus far. Please continue to let us know how we can better serve you as you preach and teach stewardship.

Advancing the Gospel!



Dr. John Yeats

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Missionary Musings

Dr. John L. Yeats

How long has it been since you preached a series on stewardship? Notice I did not say a sermon but an entire series on stewardship. Why is that important? **A series on giving is better than one sermon on giving.** George Barna years ago stated this, "A series on giving is nearly two and a half times more likely to experience an increase in giving than preachers who only talk about stewardship once a year or on two nonconsecutive times in a year."¹

Sadly, many pastors and churches fail to preach regularly on stewardship. I believe a lack of discipleship is a leading reason younger generations are giving less than their grandparents and parents have traditionally given. In each *Stewardship Journal*, we attempt to give you the tools you need to help you educate your congregation about the value of being a good steward. Let's not forget the best place to teach stewardship is from the pulpit.

Our Southern Baptist Convention has provided a great free resource for preaching on stewardship with Dr. Ronnie Floyd's recently released book called *Ten Percent: A Call to Biblical Stewardship*. You can download a free copy at <https://www.sbc.net/stewardship/>.

Dr. Ronnie Floyd was gracious enough to provide a bit of background to his new book in this print interview.

Dr. Floyd, first of all, congratulations on your new book.

Thanks, Dr. Yeats. The response to the resource is over the top! We are looking at now going to the second printing of books, plus we are also going to have it translated and printed in Spanish. I feel truly grateful for the response thus far.

Dr. Floyd, please share with us your thoughts driving your writing of 10%?

Research shows a continual decline in individual percentile giving, which indicates there is a major volitional disobedience among God's people to follow God's principles for finance. Furthermore, there is a real need to teach the biblical path to financial stewardship. All of these things and more should compel us to fulfill the Great Commission.

In your mind, what is the best way for a pastor to utilize 10%?

Do it! Preach the six biblical principles in the book while small groups focus on the same principles and biblical passages on which the pastor's sermons are built. This way, the biblical text will be discussed, not what someone thinks may or may not be true. Teach and preach the Bible—when the Bible speaks, God speaks! Yes, even about financial stewardship.

You started planning this before COVID-19 hit. With all that is going on, is now a good time to plan for a series on giving away money when people are so concerned about money?

Now is the best time! We need to help people navigate through their challenges, and I believe this series will do that as we teach these six biblical principles. Furthermore, why should we not preach and teach what the Bible says? Money is not owned by any of us—God owns it all! Placing Him first in our lives when we honor Him with at least the first tenth of all He has given us helps position us for the blessings of God in every way.

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Missionary Musings

Dr. Floyd, you have a unique perspective as the CEO of the world's largest Protestant denomination. What are your concerns for the next couple of years?

My concern for the next few years is focused on the Church pursuing Jesus individually and collectively. The Church must answer this moment because crises are occurring in every realm of life and are not sparing anyone. Therefore, we must pursue Jesus with all we are and all we have. If we do this, I believe we as laypersons, church leaders, and churches as a whole will be poised to thrive even in the midst of turmoil in America and around the world.

Dr. Floyd, 2020 has been a year of transition. You recently transitioned from a senior pastor's role to your current role at the SBC. I would say that alone would be stressful enough. Then, along came COVID. How have you handled the challenges you have faced? What advice would you give to Christian leaders?

Transition in life is continual for everyone. Going through a pandemic in a major city where we know only very few people is rather frightening. We are still somewhat new in this assignment; however, our faith in the Lord is exploding. As Christian leaders, we need to remember:

- We need God more than ever before.
- We need each other more than ever before.
- We need to fulfill the Great Commission more than ever before.

THEREFORE, we need to focus on these things in order to be the church God wants and needs us to be as we answer the call to care for those around us and reach the world.

Amen, Dr. Floyd, and thanks for sharing with our churches.

So, back to my original question, **How long has it been since you preached a series on stewardship?** With tools like *Ten Percent* and *The Stewardship Journal*, we will give you the tools necessary to preach a sermon series that will not only increase giving this year but in the years to come. My recommendation is to get Dr. Floyd's book and start planning your next stewardship series.

1. Barna, George Barna. *How to Increase Giving to Your Church*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light, 1997. 92, 93
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Current Events and Relevant Thoughts From:

The Stewardship Coach

Mark Brooks

The Key Lanes for Increasing Giving



"Stay in your lanes!" I can still hear our special teams coach yelling that at us before kickoff. Our coach didn't want the other team to reverse field and find a lane open for a touchdown. That wouldn't happen if we all stayed in our lanes.

The concept of kickoff coverage is easy to understand and implement. Each player has a section of the field assigned to him. That's your lane. You knock down or tackle anyone that comes into *your* lane. The degree to which each player manages their lanes determines the success of the kickoff.

When it comes to stewardship coaching, I think lanes. It helps me think clearly about the separate units, so to speak, of building out a stewardship plan. In this edition, entitled *The Key Lanes for Increasing Giving*, I want to give you an overview of the various "lanes" I will be focusing on in the coming weeks. It's through these lanes that we work to build out giving strategies.

At this point in the coaching year, in my newsletter, I would be giving an overview of "**The Five Key Lanes For Increasing Giving.**" My five lanes were:

- **The Pastoral Lane** – Helping senior leadership advance stewardship.
- **The Platform Lane** - What do those in attendance hear and see from your platform that will enhance or detract from their desire to give their money to you?
- **The Campus Lane** – From the moment people walk into your door, they should be positively impacted and motivated to *want* to give to your church.
- **The Direct Appeal Lane** – This combines both snail mail and email strategies.
- **The Digital Lane** – From your website to online giving to social media, we now live in a digital age.

I kept my eye on those five things for church leaders. All strategies spun out of those five main broad lanes.

And then two things happened.

First, The Great Generational Giving Shift has begun, which prompted me to add a lane I call **The Legacy Lane**. I'll share more on this in a later edition. The Legacy Lane is your strategy for your top tier donors and others who have a heart for generosity.

Secondly, COVID-19. Everything changed in the Church world almost overnight. As we are still in the pandemic, there remains so much that is unknown. Yet, all agree that virtual engagement will continue until Jesus comes back. Thus, while I already had a lane I called the Digital Lane, now all lanes must be developed physically and digitally.

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The Key Lanes for Increasing Giving

I advocate principles, not necessarily processes. I have to confess to struggling with this issue since so much has changed, and is continually changing, due to the pandemic. Two of my original five lanes are essentially related to on-site attendance. In particular, The Campus Lane is one lane whose focus *is* primarily tied to physical attendance. For now, your emphasis here might be minimal, but the concepts we will discuss when we deal with the Campus Lane will work, pandemic or not. These lanes will change and morph over time because the church is changing and morphing at an accelerated level.

Principles endure, while processes and programs change continually. This is the major reason I attempt to give you first a set of principles to operate through. For instance, pastoral involvement is crucial to the success of any giving plan. Yet how that lane is developed locally at *your* church depends entirely upon multiple factors. Next week, I'll flesh The Pastoral Lane out more fully, giving you practical ideas of implementing this lane. In the end, however, what you actually do should be determined by how you personalize each lane to fit your specific church setting.

A few weeks back, I wrote about the importance of systems and stories when building financial security for your church. How does that work with the concept of lanes? **Your systems support your lanes that your story travels upon and is communicated through.**

In the coming weeks, we will flesh out each of the lanes I have listed, working toward helping you establish a plan of action for each lane. Then we will work to merge all lanes toward telling the story of life change your church is attempting. We'll work first on helping you understand the basics of each lane and then move toward fleshing out strategies upon each lane.

Remember, the degree to which each player manages their lanes determines the kickoff's success in football. The same is true when it comes to developing your stewardship platform. My job as your coach is to help you manage your lanes to be fully funded. Our trophies don't fade; they are eternal. So, let's get lined up for the 2021 Kickoff.



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach
mark@acts17generosity.com

Find out how to access all of my playbooks at <https://acts17generosity.com/store/>

Check out my Bonus Section for a sample 2020 giving statement!

Join my Facebook Group Page! I have started a Facebook Group Page to give you more information and another way to contact and interact with me, The Stewardship Coach. To gain access, go to, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stewardshipcoaching>.

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Bonus Material

End-of-Year Giving Statement

Churches are required to send out end-of-year giving statements. In upcoming issues, I will share with you how to use Direct Appeals effectively. Many churches in our team are now beginning to send out their yearly giving statements. Here is a sample of how I would position my end-of-year statement. The following, though designed as a letter, could easily be adapted into an email.

Dear _____, **(Always personally address letters and emails.**

By God's grace and the generosity of people like you, CHURCH NAME is alive and well! 2020 was a year like none other. Yet, we found a way to not only minister to one another but to continue our mission outreach. Again, it's because of people like you.

Consider that because of the faithful generosity of our members, we have been able to:

- Provide care for families in need, including many that are hurting and in financial need during this season of COVID! When one part of the body suffers, the others run to it!
- Provide the funding needed for our new "multi-site" church with three locations - on-site at our facility, our English virtual service, and our Spanish virtual service.
- Connect with more people in more places in the history of our church!

Thank you, Church Name, for helping make all of the above and MUCH more possible!

God's not done with us yet! There are more lives to impact and change. We are looking forward to another great year of ministry impact and appreciate your continued support.

You will find a list of your 2020 giving attached. Please contact our office if you have any questions about this report. We would be more than happy to answer any questions or to help in any way.

Once again, thank you for your gifts providing life change to CITY NAME and beyond!

Blessings,

PS: Would you like to make your giving easier? You can go to <http://OURCHURCH.ORG/GIVE> and set up your giving to be recurring. I have done it and you should too!

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Missions and Ministry Moment: Setting Up Your Offering

Every week we provide what are called offering talks. We have found that the easiest way to see an increase in giving is to improve how you approach the offering time. Instead of telling people they don't have to give, we like to show them what giving to a church accomplishes. By showing people your mission and ministry focus, you will create a desire in your attendees to *want* to give to support that life change. That's why we call them Missions and Ministry Moments.

You can read it exactly how we write them or use them as idea starters for how the message would fit your culture and context. Our goal is to develop lifetime stewards, but we must get the first gift to begin them on the journey. Here is this week's offering talk.

Does \$142 Say I Love You?

Don't look now, but Valentine's Day is two weeks away! Do you have your Valentine's Day gifts ready for that special person? In the next few weeks, we will all be bombarded with advertisements to spend money expressing our love for our Valentine.

Last year Americans spent **\$142! That is, the average Americans said they would spend on cards, candies, and flowers, all in an attempt to say, I Love You.**¹ All of those flowers wilted, the candy was eaten, and most of the cards were thrown out. Is it worth it? We would all probably say yes! Telling someone you love them is important and, at times, giving a gift of love is a great reminder of our love.

Did you know that God loves us? Most of us know that. Romans 5:8 says, "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Christ is ultimately the first Valentine. He is God's Valentine to us.

The amazing thing is He did that, asking nothing in return. Isaac Watts wrote a classic hymn about God's love entitled *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*. Watts expresses amazement at the love of God in giving up His only Son for us through this great hymn. The last verse says it best:

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

This morning as we prepare to take up the offering, we give not to earn God's love. God's love is already freely given. We give to express our love and gratitude for His gift, the ultimate Valentine!

1. <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/02/13/how-much-americans-plan-to-spend-on-valentines-day.html>