

THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

Our Privilege

Ephesians 5:25

Tony Compolo has a sermon on Redeeming Time. In it he tells a story about a survey of several hundred people who had reached age ninety-five. They were asked if they could live their life over, what would they do differently?

Researchers summarized all the answers and distilled them to the most prominent three.

- (3) I would make persons more important and treat people differently.
- (2) I would take more risks with my life.
- (1) I would try to do something that would live on after I am dead.

Now that is something to think about! ...and something to act on! If you want to accomplish all three things the 95 year olds wished for...dare I say...**go to work in your church.**

Basically what these were saying was that if they had another chance they wanted their lives to really matter, to make a difference in time and eternity. They wanted their influence to live on after they are gone.

Now you probably are not 95, but you have the same desires and ambitions. Here's the answer – get involved in your church and your life and influence will matter. In fact, our Capital Program will guarantee that. Jesus said of Mary of Bethany's gift, "This which she has done will be spoken of as a memorial to her wherever the gospel is preached throughout all eternity."

What we are doing will definitely affect the lives of young and old alike. It will have an impact today and for years to come. Even those not yet born will be influenced by what you do. What you do will inexorably "live on after I am dead" as those 95 year olds' wished. What a privilege!!

How then can you get started to insure this? Here are several suggestions:

1. Get involved in what is happening today in your church. There is a class to be taught, committees to serve on, visits to be made, members who need to be encouraged – make your own list. You can matter.

2. Volunteer to assist in the work of the Capital Program. There are testimonies needed, calls to be made, meals to be prepared, prayers to be offered, etc. Ask someone now involved!
3. You can pray! This has been said so many times it has lost its meaning to many. Remember though God has promised: "Call upon me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you know not." (Jeremiah 33:3) There are miracles to be performed in our church and in your life waiting for your prayers to bring them to pass.

Here is a prayer offered in a Capital Program in another church: "Lord, you have blessed this church in a wonderful way, but I want so much more. I want to see more souls saved. I want our church to become more Christ like. I want our facilities to expand to meet our needs. I want us to give as you have given to us. I want us to learn the meaning of sacrifice and to practice it in our stewardship program. Lord I want you to answer this prayer beginning in me."

4. You can make a commitment. Yes, I know that commitment is costly (demanding). In the early days of our country John Adams was a vocal advocate of the Declaration of Independence. He once declared: " Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this [declaration]... It may cost treasure and it may cost blood, but... my whole heart is in it. All that I have and all that I am and all that I hope in this life I am now ready here to stake upon it... independence now and independence forever!"

In doing so he was risking his life, his friends, and his fortune. We all, if we love and care, must take such a stand and make such a commitment.

In our **STEWARDSHIP ENRICHMENT** program we face the moment of decision. This is my church. This is my ministry. This is my program. This is my commitment!

5. You can give sacrificially. Give yourself completely to Christ and your finances will follow. Paul praised those of Macedonia who begged him to let them give and then gave sacrificially. The key to this was that "they first gave themselves unto the Lord" (II Corinthians 8:5). This you can do! It is easier to give your money (part of you) when you have first given yourself (all of you). The songs says, "All to Jesus, I surrender. All to Him I freely give."

A little Church was having a homecoming service to which ex-members who had moved away were invited. One ex-member who attended was a man who had become a multi-millionaire. He, along with others, were giving a little testimony on their Faith experience. The rich man spoke of when, as a little boy in that Church, he had earned his first dollar – a silver dollar. "I had decided," he said, "to keep it forever. But a visiting missionary came to the Church and preached about the urgent need for funds in his mission work. Consequently, when the offering basket was passed a great struggle took place within me. As a result, I put my treasured silver dollar in the basket. And I am convinced that the reason God has blessed me richly is that when I was a boy I gave God everything I possessed." The congregation was spellbound by the multi-millionaire's tremendous testimony until an elderly little lady in the front pew rose and said, "Brother, I dare you to do it again!"

"Christ loved the church and gave himself for it."

(Ephesians 5:25)

*Lord, help me to follow Your lead and love the church so much
that I am willing to give myself - everything I have - to helping it succeed.*