

THE MONEY MARATHON: APRIL 2012

Give and it will Come Back to You

“Give and it will come back to you, pressed down, shaken together, and running over.”

—Luke 6:38

For my monthly column, which happens to be on Good Friday, I have chosen a financial topic that is also a spiritual topic - Give and it will come back to you. (I have borrowed some of this from my book, *25 Truths: Winning Wisdom for a Better Life*.)

From a financial standpoint, the best ways to approach giving of a person's money are the same ways a person can approach saving. As an example, if a person wants to give 10% of his income and save 10% of his income, he can use the same techniques for both. One technique is to take both giving and saving off the top of a person's income. For every \$100 earned, if the \$20 is taken off the top, then a person thinks in terms of having \$80 to spend. Therefore it's as if the person never had the other \$20 to spend making it much easier to accomplish both the giving and saving goals. Additionally, it is also helpful if a person can set up giving and saving to be done automatically, like deducting either from a regular paycheck or from an account. The two advantages of automatic giving and saving are that a person can't forget and secondly can't decide not to do it this time. Giving is about giving of a person's money but it is also about much more.

I believe that life is about loving God with all your heart, mind, and soul and then loving others. To love others, you must help them. Sharing, giving, and helping others will make your life fuller and much more satisfying. There are countless ways that you can go about doing this. Sometimes, a person's vocation may be helpful to others and, by doing their job well, they provide goods and/or services that benefit someone else. If that's not the case for you, you can also help a friend in need or volunteer for a non-profit organization, a church, or other charity. You can also help with a civic project or by doing something like coaching a baseball team or being a volunteer for a scouting organization. It is important to give of both your time and money, so when you're short on time you can use your money and resources to help those in need. The fascinating thing about really giving is that you often get more back in return than you give. In my life, any cause that I have really dedicated myself to that helps others has always come back to help me in other ways. Sometimes I've gotten additional professional knowledge that has helped me in my career; other times I've made contacts with people who have been beneficial to me, and many times I've been given the opportunity to take on other challenges. All of these benefits are in addition to the satisfaction I get from making a positive difference.

Eight or nine years ago, I decided to help out at my church by volunteering to play the guitar and sing for the four-year-old and younger class that is held during our church service. I'm not a great guitar player or singer (although kids four years old and younger think I'm really good) but it helps the leaders in the class find ways to occupy the kids during the service. Additionally, the little kids all seem to enjoy it and will point at me out in public and say “there is Mr. Ed” and give me high fives when I finish singing. Although the little kids enjoy it, their delight is not nearly as much as mine. When I play for them it makes me feel good for the rest of the day. If I have to be gone for a week, I miss it. That is the way giving works.

During this Easter season, remember... **if a person gives of his talents, time, and money for the sole purpose of helping someone else, his gift will multiply.**

Remember every investor's situation is unique, and it is important to review your specific situation with a financial professional.

Ed Douglas is a Certified Financial Planner/Consultant, Chairman Emeritus of Citizens Bancshares and author of three books, "Making a Million With Only \$2000-Every Young Person Can Do It", "The Money Marathon: 7 Simple Steps to Financial Freedom" and his new book "25 Truths: Winning Wisdom for a Better Life", available at www.eddouglas.com. Ed can be contacted for financial planning services or seminars based on his books at ed@eddouglas.com or 660-646-2066 or at his office at 601 Locust.

25 TRUTHS: WINNING WISDOM FOR A BETTER LIFE, TRUTH NUMBER 15: Never Surrender.

Ed's books are available at eddouglas.com, Hy-Vee, Amazon, or Boji Stone.