

SOUTH SHORE BAPTIST CHURCH

GIVING
TO MAKE HIS
GLORY
KNOWN
Habukkuk 2:14

Building Campaign
Devotional
Study Guide



Building Campaign Devotional Study Guide

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GIVING
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Brothers and Sisters at South Shore Baptist,

What an exciting moment this is for our congregation! After over ten years of waiting, working and praying, God has opened the doors for us with the town to build a much needed expansion to the facility. Our congregation has responded by endorsing the project with an amazing show of unity at our January 26th special meeting.

The next step in the process is to gather the necessary funds. We want to raise at least \$1.6 million in pledges from the congregation over the next few weeks. I say at least \$1.6 million, because the more we raise beyond that figure, the less debt we'll need to carry.

But our hope is that this fund-raising period will not only be used to build a building. We pray that God will use it to build our church. Have you ever thought that maybe this building project is as much about what God wants to build in us as it is about what He wants to build through us? What if God wants to use a seemingly worldly process of giving pledges to draw us closer to Jesus as our ultimate treasure?

I believe God has lessons to teach our congregation over the next year, including lessons about our attitudes toward money and possessions. A capital campaign is a wonderful discipleship opportunity for all of us to search God's word and allow it to mold our thinking in regard to wealth. In what do we really trust? Do we reflect God's generosity to us in our own generosity to others and to the work of the kingdom? Do we give cheerfully and intentionally as an act of worship? Are we rich toward God?

To that end we've prepared this devotional guide for you to study anew what Scripture teaches about money, our hearts, and giving. This guide and other materials will be added to the church website in the coming weeks as additional study resources on giving from the heart. You can use it for your own personal reading, as part of your family worship, or even in a small group Bible study. Before we go writing checks and filling out pledge cards, let's ask God to speak to our hearts. Don't waste this season of facility expansion by merely focusing on putting up bricks and mortar. It's time to draw close to God and awaken from our lukewarm complacency so we will be spiritually ready to use this building for the sake of his gospel.

May God build his church as his church builds this facility,

Pastor Jeramie

CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

The building expansion project is an out-working of almost ten years of prayer, planning, and work. It is tied directly to the central objectives of our mission as a church and is intended for the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom on the South Shore.

After several years of prayer, planning and approvals, SSBC is embarking on a major expansion of our building, including a new sanctuary that will more than double our capacity and new classrooms that will add significant classroom and ministry space. We envision our new facility as a place that will enable us to:

- increase access to biblically-centered preaching, teaching, and worship
- support the growing influx of adults and children coming to SSBC to worship, fellowship, learn and grow

We also envision that by creating space to accommodate the people the Lord is sending to SSBC, we will further glorify God by propelling and fuelling:

- increased missions and evangelism
- growth of discipleship ministries
- new church plants
- expanded local outreach opportunities
- training for area pastors, church leaders, and SSBC ministry interns

While this project involves a much larger building, it is much more than that. In reality, the expansion's purpose is to create a platform that will allow SSBC to more fully pursue our vision to reach the South Shore and beyond. The new capabilities of the facility are God's to use as He pleases in working out His sovereign purposes.

Current Space Capacity Needs

SSBC presently suffers from a shortage of space in every major category, thus limiting our ability to bring more South Shore residents and others into the church. The nurseries are crowded beyond capacity; some adult classes cannot be offered due to space limitations; no large space exists for congregational gatherings; and a shortage of office space limits the addition of pastoral and administrative staff. Outreach efforts are space constrained, including our annual Vacation Bible School, which has had to turn away children the last two years.

Evangelizing the South Shore and Beyond

In addition to increasing our capacity for worship and ministry, we seek to reach unchurched people through increased support for missions, planting new churches, and serving as a training base for pastors and church leaders. A larger facility, with its anticipated larger staff and the ability to offer training to area leaders and hire pastoral interns, will enable us to multiply gospel ministry across the region and around the world. The increased attendance expected at SSBC will allow us to fund and support these initiatives without drawing resources away from existing ministry efforts at SSBC. In short, we will be able to reach more people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Devotional Study

The following devotional on biblical giving was developed to reinforce a biblical view of giving as we are being asked to commit financially in supporting the building project. The decision to begin a capital campaign was prayerfully considered. Now is the time to consider before the Lord our own personal stewardship, asking what He would have us commit to give and trust Him to provide. We trust this devotional study and the information for reflection that follows will help you as you consider your part in the campaign and make your commitment decision. This study guide includes a commitment guide at the end which is offered as an aid to help you assess and plan your giving.

The Building Finance Committee is interested in your giving joyously and generously from the heart from a biblical perspective, and does not want anyone to feel in any way coerced or manipulated.

STORING TREASURES

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19-21

If you were asked what is one of the greatest obstacles to Christianity, what would you say? If you were asked to name a great obstacle to the work God has called SSBC to do in this area, what would you say it is? If you were asked what subject Christ spoke about almost more than any other topic, what would you say it is? Matthew 6 demonstrates that there is, in fact, a relationship between these three questions. There may be no topic Jesus discussed more in his ministry than that of money and possessions. Perhaps the reason for this emphasis is that Jesus knows something about the struggle of all of our hearts.

Beginning with verse 19 and continuing through the end of this chapter, Christ lays before us three kingdom commands. The first is, “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” The second is, “Don’t be anxious.” And the third is, “Seek my kingdom.” The first of those commands is set out in both positive

and negative language: positively, the command is to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven; conversely, the command is not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth. The assumed principle of the entire passage is that everybody lives for some kind of treasure.

We are value-oriented, value-driven human beings, living in pursuit of something. What are you pursuing? Perhaps you are magnetized by the acceptance of others. In ways that you may not realize, you are moved and motivated by how people respond to you; if you watched the video of your life you might say, “This person lives for the acceptance of others.” Or maybe you live for power and control, always trying to move yourself into positions of influence. Maybe you like to be the center of attention. Maybe you live for success, and your life and schedule is frenetic because no success is ever enough for you. You are always careening from one success to the next in a workaholic manner. Perhaps

you live for the comfort of material possessions, and you work to surround yourself with all the accoutrements of life that you think would make you comfortable. Perhaps you live for pleasure, attracted to the edible and experiential pleasures of the created world. Somehow, some way, all of us are living for something; everyone pursues some kind of treasure.

Treasure is a very descriptive term, isn't it? It is an evocative way of getting at what moves and motivates you and me, revealing where the rubber meets the road in our everyday lives.

But what is treasure? A treasure is something of value. Yet not many treasures have intrinsic value; most treasures have assigned value. For example, if I hold up a dollar bill in front

of you and ask you what it's worth, you will say, "one dollar." Of course. But it is not one dollar's worth of ink or one dollar's worth of paper—it is an assigned value of worth. However, once we have assigned that piece of paper that particular value, it takes on all kinds of influence in our lives. We often judge the quality of our lives by how many of these dollars we have. Their availability may determine where we live; who we hang out with; what kind of food we eat; how we spend our old age; and the quality of our healthcare. The assigned value of that piece of paper is thus tremendously influential.

What an interesting word, treasure. It really just means anything of value that you live for. So the question is, what things do you treasure most? How vital it is that we recognize what we treasure!

QUESTIONS:

What are some things that you have been treasuring recently?

How do the place where you live, the places you go, and the people you spend time with reflect where your treasure is?

Are there particular things or priorities that you know you should not be treasuring?

Do you recognize the sinful pursuits in your life?

What steps can you take today to redirect your heart away from the wrong treasures and toward the right ones?

PRAYER RESPONSE:

Father, forgive me for treasuring things that you do not want me to treasure.

Give me grace to desire the priorities of your infinite kingdom rather than the fleeting treasures of this world. Make me someone who recognizes and actively lays up treasures in heaven, where Christ my Lord sits at your right hand.

This I ask in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen.

A HEART FULL OF TREASURE

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21

We have looked at our Lord’s command in Matthew 6 to lay up heavenly treasures instead of earthly ones, and we considered that a treasure is anything of value that we live for. As we continue our study of this chapter, we find a second principle in our Lord’s teaching on treasure in verse 21:

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Simply put, Jesus tells us that the things you treasure are the things that control your heart. They control your desires, your thoughts, and your emotions. In fact, you interpret all of life through the lens of what you treasure. What makes you happy is moving closer to your treasure; what makes you distressed or sad is moving away from your treasure.

The following story provides a wonderful picture of the power of treasure to captivate the heart. A couple went one evening to an auction where the wife bought an old diamond ring for \$175. It was a spontaneous purchase. The next morning she took the ring to be evaluated by a member of the American Association of Gemologists. After looking at the ring for a while, the appraiser came out and said, “Ma’am, I want to talk to you about your ring. It’s really a very beautiful diamond, although it isn’t set on prongs like they do these days—it’s just sort of buried into the setting. But the diamond is worth somewhere between three and five thousand dollars.” Well, that was a pretty

good return on her investment. But then the appraiser went on to say words that she would never forget: “But, ma’am, what’s most valuable about the ring is not the diamond, but the setting. It is a DaVinci setting, worth \$50,000.”

As the woman was describing this conversation to her husband over the phone, he said what any husband would in such a moment: “Did he offer to buy it?” He was probably hoping that some of the proceeds could buy the new boat he had his eye on! She said, “Yes, he did; he said he would write me a check on the spot for \$35,000.” So the husband said, “You sold the ring, didn’t you?” Her reply was, “I did not. It’s worth at least \$53,000!”

Some time later the couple was walking through the mall and the wife was waving her hand about. The husband thought she had developed “mall palsy” from over-shopping, but it turned out this was ring protection behavior. You see, she was afraid to leave the ring at a bank or at home, so she had it with her at all times. If that woman were to lose a pair of shoes and that ring on the same day, which one do you think she would panic over? Which one do you think she would look for first?

Now you begin to understand the concept of treasure and the hold it has on us.

QUESTIONS:

What treasure captures your heart? What things make you sad or angry to lose, and what does this indicate about what you truly believe?

How much time, energy, and money do you put into what you treasure?

How are you rejoicing at the thought of having treasure in heaven?

PRAYER RESPONSE:

Lord, my heart is so easily captivated by earthly treasure. I often feel overwhelmed by the desire for things that I know I should not be chasing; forgive me for setting my heart on these things. Help me set my heart on the heavenly treasures of the Almighty God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

RICH CHRISTIAN, POOR CHRISTIAN

“As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury.² He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins.[a] ³ ‘I tell you the truth,’ he said, ‘this poor widow has put in more than all the others.⁴ All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.’” Luke 21:1-4

“So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.⁶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.⁷ Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” 2 Corinthians 9:5-7

Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21). By that standard, when the poor widow gave her two little coins she was really putting her heart into the box, offering her whole self to God. How different she was from the scribes! They were all about what was on the outside, but she was living for God on the inside, so what came out of her was what was already there. This is what God wants from us: not just our money, but ourselves, from the inside all the way out.

If it is true that we always put our money where our heart is, then one of the best ways to tell what is inside of us is by what we give to God. However, we have to measure this the way that Jesus does and not the way we usually do: not in comparison to what other people give, but in comparison to our own financial situation. This is one of the basic principles of God’s economy. He takes into account how much we have, and values what we give in proportion to what we have been given.

How extraordinarily encouraging this is for Christians who are living in poverty! Jesus sees what is in our bank account, he knows what is in our hearts, and he judges accordingly. Even if we have almost nothing, he prizes what we give as highly as a king’s ransom. For example, consider a pastor who, while he was studying in England, had as his only income a small monthly check for about

thirty pounds (roughly \$60), which the British government provided for families with children. He gave half of it to his church and used the other half to buy diapers. Based on what Jesus said about the widow’s offering, I suppose that what he gave was worth as much to God as a million dollars from a multi-millionaire.

No one should ever think that the small contributions of poor Christians are almost worthless. On the contrary, by grace they are worth as much to God as anything, and they will receive the praise of Jesus Christ. Furthermore, God will use them richly for the work of his kingdom. Just think what God has done with the two little coins that the widow gave—what a wealth of encouragement the church has received from her example of sacrificial giving. God has multiplied her gift by millions and billions.

At the same time, the principal of proportionality ought to be deeply disturbing to Christians who have as much money as most Americans have. Cyril of Alexandria was right when he told his congregation that this story from the Gospel of Luke “may perhaps irritate some among the rich.” Indeed, it may well irritate some of us, because we are some of the richest Christians in the history of the world, with the capacity to give more for the kingdom of God than almost anyone has ever given.

Yet we are giving out of our abundance, and therefore in comparison with the widow we are giving practically nothing. We have so much that even when we give a little it seems like a lot and we are easily satisfied with what we give, as if we have really done something generous for God. But what would it take for us to give as much as the widow gave? It would take most of us months to

even do it because we would have so much property to get rid of. It is good for us to give God whatever we have been giving, but if we are rich, we should not think more highly of our giving than God does. Beware of the scribes! Don't look at your financial giving on the outside, the way the scribes do, but on the inside, the way that God does.

QUESTIONS:

What lessons can you learn from the generous giving of the poor widow?

How does your giving measure up?

What sacrifices can you make in order to give more?

PRAYER RESPONSE:

O God of the widow, grant that I may have such love for you that I would be willing to give all that I have back to you. Forgive me for giving so little out of such an abundance. Give me grace to give even beyond what I am able, knowing that you take account of all these things. I pray in Jesus' name, and for his sake. Amen.

SPECIFIC ITEMS FOR PRAYER

1. Thanksgiving for the souls that are being led by God's Spirit to seek his will and seek fellowship at South Shore Baptist Church.
2. Thanks for God's provision of the 10/12 Free Street, which has proven to be the key to getting the required zoning approvals.
3. Thanksgiving for God's provision of the funding to move forward and for the many who have volunteered to assist in this endeavor.
4. Wisdom for the Building Committee as they continue to develop the plan, make decisions on vendors, and execute the many details involved in structural changes.
5. Timing of the sequence of projects, ability of contractors to meet deadlines, and ability to stay on budget for expenses.
6. Patience and forbearance in the construction period while waiting for completion, living with space shortages, and putting up with the disruption of the construction.
7. God's blessing on future ministry, especially as new people come into the church, with expanded ministry opportunities.
8. That we will continue to be good neighbors to those who abut the church's property, that we will invite them in, and that some will come to know Christ through our witness.

COMMITMENT GUIDE

Your three-year financial commitment to “Giving to Make His Glory Known” should be the result of a meaningful spiritual journey. This personal commitment guide will help you take your first steps. Use this guide to discover God’s will and your full potential to fulfill God’s desire. Above all, pray for wisdom!

There is no formula, no quick accounting, and no percentage target for a capital campaign commitment. The true measure of corporate giving is giving with a generous heart. Some people can make a large gift, but every person can meaningfully invest in what God is doing at SSBC in proportion to their blessings.

Our goal is that you discover a new joy in giving. To fully experience the freedom and spiritual depths a life of grace offers, we must learn to give as freely and deeply as God has given to us.

See the Questions to Consider, Planning Worksheet, and Stewardship Resources on the following pages for assistance.

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Matthew 6:21

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

In terms of affecting people and ministries, what will the building project accomplish for God, for others, and for you? *Matthew 28:19; Luke 17:20-21; I Kings 5:5*

What does your heart prompt you to do? Describe it. *Exodus 25:1-2, I Corinthians 13:3; 2 Corinthians 9:7*

What is your “Prayer Plan” to discern God’s will? *Luke 11:9-10; John 17; Matthew 6:5-13*

What does “sacrifice” mean to you? Define it. *Romans 12:1-2; Luke 21:1-4*

What can you do to give sacrificially and invest in the lives of others? Start a list. *I Chronicles 29:1-10; Acts 2:44-47; Acts 4:32-37*

PLANNING WORKSHEET

Income and Sacrifice

1. Analyze your projected income and spending patterns for the next three years. How much can you give and when?

2. How can you alter your lifestyle in order to give what you save or do not spend?

Giving Assets

1. What accumulated assets could be transferred to the church?

2. What assets could be sold so that their value could be permanently invested in ministry?

Time and Talents

1. What can you do to earn extra resources that can be given during this period?

2. Are there “gifts-in-kind” of services and/or materials you could offer?

Resulting Three-Year Potential Commitment: \$ _____

STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES

The following are additional resources you may wish to consult as you consider your campaign commitment:

South Shore Baptist Church:

The Diaconate is able to assist you in budgeting, if desired.

For information on giving through Charitable Gift Annuities, Charitable Trusts, Appreciated Securities, Real Estate, Life Insurance, or Gifts in Kind, contact an Elder, a Pastor or a member of the Building Finance Committee.

Websites:

Generous Giving (www.generousgiving.com) is a privately-funded ministry that seeks to encourage givers of all income levels to experience the joy of giving and embrace a lifestyle of generosity, according to God's Word and Christ's example. The site includes links to a number of helpful articles as well as calculators and other tools.

Crown Financial Ministries (www.crown.org) offers many free financial planning tools and motivational articles as well as resources you can purchase.

The Good Steward (www.thegoodsteward.com) is an online magazine that serves as a source for information and tools on all areas of stewardship.

Dave Ramsey (www.daveramsey.com) offers a number of services to help focus on debt elimination and saving and investing wisely.

Books:

Alcorn, Randy. *The Treasure Principle*. Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 2005.

Guinness, Os. *Doing Well and Doing Good: Money, Giving, and Caring in a Free Society*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2001.

Oxford, Stephen. *The Grace of Giving: A Biblical Study of Christian Stewardship*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, revised 2001.

Dayton, Howard. *Your Money Counts*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1997.