



*Synergism
for a
Lifestyle
of Change*

*"God can
bless you with
everything you
need, and you
will always
have more
than enough
to do all kinds
of good things
for others."*

*2 Corinthians 9:8
(CEV)*



STEWARDS FOR **NEW** LIFE



TAXING PLANS

by Soozie Whitten Ford

Just as an annual medical exam is an opportunity to assess my well being and to make choices about a healthy lifestyle, so the weeks leading up to April 15 provide a window of opportunity to evaluate my family's financial health. I really don't like to gather the forms, documents and receipts—it's a tedious and time-consuming process! However, I've found the information helps me as I think about the past year and make plans for the future.

One way to measure family financial health and spiritual vitality is to calculate the percentage of income given to church and charitable causes. Our family is committed to giving a minimum of 10% of income to our local church. We also give to the America for Christ offering and the other American Baptist offerings received during the year, and to additional needs we want to support.

A friend once remarked, after a discussion on giving, "You give away an awful lot!" Not really. I trust that each dollar given helps share the Good News with others in some fashion. I want to grow in my faithful use of all of God's gifts—and tax time is the ideal time to take new steps in that direction.



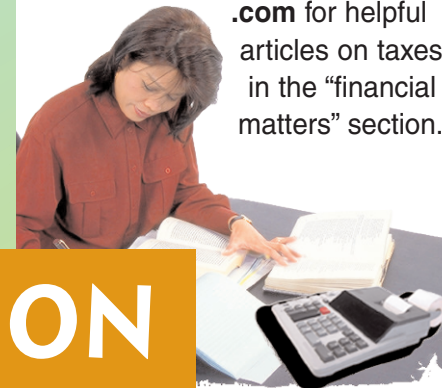
FACTS OF LIFE

- Americans give away about \$100 billion each year.
- Less than 12% of all adults give 10% or more of their income to a church.
- In 2000, the average giving per person to charitable causes was \$886, down by 15% from 1999.

FOR MORE

INFORMATION

- Wondering how much time you have left to file your taxes before April 15? Check out the clock at <http://money.cnn.com/pf/taxes>.
- Look at www.thegoodsteward.com for helpful articles on taxes in the "financial matters" section.



STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

- Think about ways to use whatever tax refund you may receive, such as a significant donation to a special church ministry, the America for Christ Offering, or an ABC regional, national, or international mission project. If you need the refund for other necessities, consider giving away 10% of the amount. For suggestions, contact your pastor or region's minister of mission support.
- Evaluate your level of debt, especially the amount tied to credit cards. What steps can you take to reduce debt?
- In our current economic situation, many people received no raise this year, while others have lost their jobs. How is your church responding to these realities—in terms of people affected and the possible impact on church ministry and outreach?
- As you consider the stewardship of all your assets—time, skills, finances—respond to this question: How can I manage my affairs so that I can give more?



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