



COOKSON HILLS
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LEGACY

THIS ISSUE:

In this issue we want to explore the subject of a *Christian will*. This will be the first of two issues on this subject. We hear a lot today about Christian wills, but in reality, we should be talking about a *Christian's will*.

Before we discuss what a Christian's will should be, let's look at some common misconceptions concerning a Christian will.

What a CHRISTIAN WILL is not...

There are several things that, by themselves, do not necessarily make a will a Christian will.

A Christian will is not just a will written by a Christian

How can an individual live a Christian life, be actively involved in the church, give faithfully to God's work here on earth, and not consider estate distribution at the time of death as an act of stewardship?

A will is not Christian simply because it contains a Christian testimony

A Christian's will can speak of the individual's spiritual faith. The "Last Will and Testament" could definitely be a "Last Will and Testimony," and we'll talk more about that subject. But by itself, a testimony does not make a Christian will.

A will is not a Christian will just because it makes a gift to a Christian organization

Many individuals feel that by giving ten percent of their estates to Christian organizations, they have Christian wills. In the Scriptures, tithing is the giving of cash flow, but the will deals with the distribution of net worth. The cattle on a thousand hills, houses and land, silver and gold, and the earth in all its fullness belong to God. Not 10%, but 100%.

We will also talk in the next newsletter about ways to give to charitable organizations through your will. However, a charitable gift by itself does not make a Christian will. ●

Cookson Hills is firmly committed to good stewardship of funds entrusted to us by our friends and donors. We promise to use your gifts effectively and wisely in Christ's name.

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OUR MISSION:

Cookson Hills exists to serve our ministry partners by providing Christ-centered services to children and families in crisis



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What is a CHRISTIAN'S WILL?

A will written by a Christian, containing a Christian testimony, making a gift to a Christian organization, is not in itself a Christian will. A Christian's will probably would contain all three of these elements. However, it goes beyond these three aspects.

The motivation is stewardship

Why does a Christian have a will? Much of the literature circulated in our churches and charitable organizations will lead you to believe that every Christian is obligated to have a will. To die without a will means that property will be distributed according to law, and that may be more costly. This is true. But this is a reason for everyone to have a will, not just a Christian.

The motivation for a Christian to have a will is rooted in deep spiritual tradition. It is based on the understanding that an important part of a Christian lifestyle is a relationship to God and the property that He has entrusted to us.

The earth in all of its fullness belongs to God. As Christians, He has entrusted property to us as His caretakers, trustees, stewards. We are charged with a sacred trust. How we manage that trust during our lifetimes

and distribute the trust assets at the time of death are important parts of our spiritual lifestyles.

Stewardship is not simply giving a percentage of our income. Financial stewardship can be defined as "using God-given abilities, to manage God-owned properties, to accomplish God-ordained results." Therefore, every financial decision becomes a spiritual decision, including the distribution of property at the time of death.

Which leads us to the second difference in a Christian's will.

It reflects God's plan of distribution for property

A Christian must take time to find out what God's plan of distribution is for property. A Christian does not automatically assume that property will be divided among certain family members, based upon tradition. In fact, tradition is probably not a valid reason for making distribution through the will. In the Scriptures, we find two reasons to give:

1. Dependency

I Timothy 5:8 states, "If anyone does not provide for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

It is obvious that those who are financially dependent upon us must receive priority in our giving decisions.

2. Love

The second reason for giving is that "God so loved that He gave." He set a pattern for us to follow. Though someone is not financially dependent, it does not mean that we cannot give to them. But we do it out of love.

share with them because we love them and the lost, dying, and hurting world they are reaching.

The *second step* in finding God's plan of stewardship for our estates is to make an inventory of the properties that He has

assume all values to be cash.

Then assume that you are giving that cash away today, to the people you listed. But before you do, stop and ask the Holy Spirit to show you His plan of distribution. How much does He want you to give to each of



The *first step* in finding God's plan of stewardship is to list

those who are financially dependent (husband, wife, aged parents, minor children) and those to whom we want to give because of love. Remember that the charitable organizations we support depend upon our contributions to finance God's work here on earth. And we

entrusted to us. What do you own? How do you own it? When did you buy it? What did you pay for it? What is it worth today?

Add up those values, and then think of them in terms of cash. We think of distributing houses, land, stocks and bonds, but we have a difficult time realizing the impact our gifts will have upon the lives of individuals. So

those you have listed because of dependency, and how much to each of those you have listed because of love? This is the third step in finding God's plan of stewardship for our estates.

We know life will continue and many things will change. But the only valid will is the one that's in effect the day after death. So we must plan today.



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SUMMARY: GOD'S PLAN OF STEWARDSHIP

LET'S SUMMARIZE HOW TO FIND GOD'S PLAN OF STEWARDSHIP:

- Make a listing of your people (individuals and charitable organizations), considering dependency and love
- Make a listing of property, think of it as cash
- Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, assume that you are giving this amount to the people you have listed, today

This becomes the foundation for a Christian's will, God's plan of stewardship for your estate.

Finding God's plan of stewardship for your estate is the foundation of your will. To assist you in this process, our staff has prepared a *Guide To Planning Your Estate*.

We want you to have a copy. It is our gift to you. There is no cost or obligation. Please take time now to call **918.597.2192** for your copy. We look forward to hearing from you.