

The Stewardship JOURNAL

December 20, 2021

**From the Desk of Our
Executive Director**

Missionary Musings

**The Stewardship Coach's Year-End
Thoughts for Pastors to Think About**

End-of-Year Email Sample

The Best News of All

How to Fulfill Your Resolutions



THE STEWARDSHIP JOURNAL

From the Desk of Our Executive Director

Announcing the 2022 Stewardship Journal! We have been blessed by so many reports and stories of how the *Journal* has helped pastors that we are committing to another year. Read my *Missionary Musings* post to find out some of the exciting changes we are making to improve the *Journal* in 2022. The bottom line is a better delivery process with continued quality stewardship help.

Here is a preview of what you can expect in the following pages:

Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, writes a post this week entitled ***The Stewardship Coach's Year-End Thoughts for Pastors to Think About***. Mark gives some practical thoughts and ideas on how you can end your year well to start the new year strong.

This week's **Bonus Section** gives you a sample December 31st email. With the growth of online giving, it is possible now to have a 24/7 offering. This sample email will show you how to craft a story that leads to additional giving on the last day of the year.

We give you an "offering talk" in our Mission and Ministry Moment section every week. Since this is our last *Journal* until the new year, we have provided you with two. The December 26th talk is entitled ***The Best News of All***. The January 2nd talk is entitled ***How to Fulfill Your Resolutions***.

Remember, if you know of someone that would like to receive the *Journal*, please send them this link for easy signup: <https://mobaptist.org/stewardship/stewardship-journal/>.

Let me end this year by thanking our team and *you*, our readers. I am encouraged by the progress we have made, and I am excited about the 2022 *Stewardship Journal* to come!

Advancing the Gospel!



Dr. John Yeats

During this holiday season, please note there will be no *Stewardship Journal* on the following dates:

- November 29
- December 27
- January 3

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Missionary Musings

Dr. John L. Yeats

Mainline Protestant churches are faring worse financially than evangelical ones. That was a recent finding in a study we reported on in our December 6th edition of *The Stewardship Journal*. We stated our conclusion as to why with this quote, “We have traditionally taught and preached stewardship, especially tithing. This emphasis on biblical stewardship is one of the major reasons SBC churches are better off financially than their Mainline neighbors.” That has *been* our tradition, but will it continue to be our tradition with an aging donor base?

In our first *Stewardship Journal*, I was asked what the driving idea behind creating *The Stewardship Journal* was? I responded by saying, “Our goal is to serve our churches by resourcing pastors with practical tools. I felt we needed to be proactive rather than reactive. The *Journal* is one step we are taking to combat the decline in giving.” I’m not trying to brag, but no other SBC entity provides leaders with the tools and resources for enhancing stewardship like we are.

Is it making a difference? We hear good reports from pastors across the state about how they have used the *Journal*. In last week’s edition of the *Journal*, Pastor Brad Delaughter of FBC DeSoto shared one way he was using the *Journal* by saying, “I began incorporating the ‘Offering Talks’ into our worship time. We stressed giving as an act of faith and worship during these talks. We also told each week of the previous week’s giving and how it impacted local, state, national, or international ministries. We encouraged and challenged our members to join us in impacting our world for Christ through giving.” He then had this word for his fellow pastors when he said, “I want to encourage others to read the *Journal* because it encourages all pastors to deal with giving and finance issues. It is encouraging to know you do not have to have all the answers. If nothing else, I encourage pastors to use the ‘Offering Talks.’”

Comments like the above encourage us as we transition into next year’s editions of the *Journal*. Our team has been working for the last few weeks on improving our delivery process. Rob Phillips, our Director of Ministry Support & Apologetics, heads up the *Journal* team. He has been working with Tony Boes, our web and social media specialist, on that process. I asked Rob for a short statement about next year’s *Journal*. Here is what he wrote:

“The 2022 *Journal* is a web-based newsletter with clickable links. Each article is a blog post, and each weekly *Journal* is an e-newsletter with teasers and links to the articles. This significantly improves the static PDF that requires opening/downloading. We believe the new and improved *Stewardship Journal* addresses feedback from our readers and serves as a more attractive and accessible version of the *Journal*, with easier access to archived stories.”

Thanks, Rob! We believe the new system will also allow us to accomplish one of our goals of providing a treasure trove of material online for pastors and church leaders to access 24/7.

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Missionary Musings

Dr. John L. Yeats

While we are excited about a new delivery process, we are equally excited about the content we will see in 2022. I'm pleased to announce that Mark Brooks, The Stewardship Coach, has agreed to continue helping our team create, edit, and write posts for the *Journal* and allowing us to use his weekly articles, bonus materials, and offering talks.

I asked Mark to comment about what we can expect next year from the "Coach." "Dr. Yeats, I am so excited to continue working with MBC pastors and church leaders. One of my major focuses for next year is to help us understand that while COVID has changed and will continue to change giving, the offering isn't dead; it's different. I'll be fleshing that out the first few weeks of the year. I'm also excited to continue to help MBC pastors write and speak out on various stewardship-related topics."

One of the encouraging things for me personally about this past year's *Journal* has been reading the thoughts of MBC pastors either in interviews or in articles they have written. Hearing *your* stories inspires others and gives them great ideas. Our team is always looking for a great story to tell. If you have a story or an interest in writing for the *Journal*, contact Rob Phillips at rphillips@mobaptist.org.

Tom Elliff, former IMB and SBC president, would always say, "Christianity is only one generation away from extinction." When it comes to stewardship, the same is true. Let's work to train up the next generation of generous stewards. *The Stewardship Journal* is here to help you do exactly that! We will see you in January!

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Current Events and Relevant Thoughts From:

The Stewardship Coach

Mark Brooks

The Stewardship Coach's Year-End Thoughts for Pastors to Think About



Think like a pastor. A few years ago, I was thinking through some issue, and I remember writing in the upper left-hand corner of the page, think like a pastor. Having spent over twenty years as a senior pastor gives me a perspective that others in my industry can never appreciate or understand. I've been there and done that and have the scars on my back to prove it. (Now I realize many of those scars were self-inflicted!)

I must be honest and admit that the last time I stepped into a pulpit as a pastor, many pastors I now coach were not even born. The picture on the left is of me preaching at my last church this past April. I had not been in the pulpit as their pastor in over, well, a long time. So, from time to time, I need to be reminded what it is like to be you, and thus I

write down, think like a pastor.

What should pastors be thinking? That is the question I also ask myself. As we near the completion of this year, and the start of the new, I thought it would be wise to hear what you should be thinking about from your Stewardship Coach. So, this Coach is entitled, *The Stewardship Coach's Year-End Thoughts for Pastors to Think About*. Here is what I think you should be thinking about.

How can I use the next couple of weeks to rest, reflect and recharge my passion for ministry? Let's start with *you* getting **rest**. Can I give you a bit of older brother advice? Your church can and will survive without you. If they can't, you have provided poor leadership in training up leaders. My point is, get away these next few weeks. Get away from the phone, the emails, the constant need to be present for everything. You can't lead well if you are exhausted. Also, you aren't worth being a leader if you neglect your family. They are your number one ministry. So, schedule some date nights. Go play dolls, video games, or toss the ball around with your kids. And if you need a sermon, email me, and I'll send you a ton of outlines you can preach.

Spend time reflecting. What worked and what didn't work in 2021? Why and what will you do about it in 2022? What challenges do you face, and what are your thoughts on how to overcome them? When it comes to giving, I would be thinking about how we can better use our vision's connecting power to increase generosity. What stories should we focus on to show that vision in action? How can we improve our discipleship process to train the next generation of stewards? Those are a few questions I would be thinking about. When I work with clients, I advise them to think quarterly.

A couple of years ago, in an edition of the Coach, I wrote the following that might be helpful in directing your thinking, especially when it comes to giving.

The Basic Elements of Quarterly Planning – Here is a basic outline that you can work through in your upcoming staff meetings or whatever lay group you work with.

Review – Everyone needs to know where you are. Your review should contain two elements. First, you need to review your giving. When you review, look at the following...

- How much has been given to date and how that compares to the budget need.
- How did the last quarter compare year to date from last year.
- Always look at how the past week compared to the same week last year and the previous week.

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The Stewardship Coach's Year-End Thoughts for Pastors to Think About

- Then finally, were there any new donors that showed up for the first time? Every church has a backdoor. This is why you need to continually think about and look for new donors. The number of losses compared to gains is what we call 'The Churn Rate.' How is yours?

The second element of your review is to look at what you did the last quarter in terms of attempting to increase giving and givers. What worked? What did not work and why? What were the reasons something worked or did not work? How can you improve? What lessons can be learned?

Preview – Next, talk about what is coming up in the next quarter. What missions or ministry initiatives does your church have? What will be the focus for the three months coming up? Then, how can you build out a message to support those initiatives? Then, plan accordingly.

While the gist of the above dealt with quarterly planning, you can easily adapt that to think through the conclusion of the fourth quarter and your year in review.

Next, I want you to think about the start of your new year. Let me again quote myself from a past edition of the Coach:

How important is a good start? I wondered how important the first quarter of a football game would be in determining the winner. I searched the Internet and found some football nerd who had actually crunched the number for NFL teams one year. Amazingly, **3/4 of teams leading after the 1st quarter go on to victory.**¹

How can you get off to a good start? First, by casting a vision for the need for faithful giving to continue. January is one of the most challenging months in terms of giving. So, let's put a focus on the power of generosity resulting in changed lives. Don't beg people to give. Show them how giving matters. To that end, start planning out each offering moment. What stories can you focus on to show people how their gift matters? Next,

Make January Recurring Giving Sign Up Month! Across all your platforms, I would share the value of generosity and how recurring giving makes being generous easy. At <https://www.onlinegiving.org/>, we work to improve our client's ACH because it saves you money and better assures July will be in the black. For more information about how to increase your ACH recurring giving email me at mark@onlinegiving.org.

Here is the most important question I want you to think about, how can you recharge your passion for ministry? It's easy to simply run on autopilot. That works for the short term to keep you going. At some point, however, you run dry. So, spend some time in the Word. Not sermon prep but actual quiet time with just you and the Holy Spirit. Spend time praying. Give yourself time to be silent and know that He is God! Because frankly, pastor, you are not worth a flip for the Kingdom apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. You can't revive your church if you are the one needing revival.

One final word, **I'm here for you.** I answer emails and phone calls. At least when it comes to increasing giving, you are not alone. I'm no longer a pastor, but my role now is to be a coach to pastors. Let's end 2021 well and start 2022 off even better!



Mark Brooks – The Stewardship Coach
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1. https://www.reddit.com/r/nfl/comments/9dblm0/oc_quarterbyquarter_win_percentage_analysis_2017/

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Bonus Material

You can raise hundreds and thousands of dollars with a December 31st email send. Here is a sample of an email I wrote for my White Paper, *The Two Minute Drill: A Last-Minute Guide to Increasing End-of-Year Giving*. For a free copy, email me at mark@onlinegiving.org.

December 31 Last email blast to be sent at 2 PM EST

Subject line: Will Your Team Win in the Last 2 Minutes?

Dear _____,

Many of the bowl games we watch in the next few days will be won or lost in the last two minutes! The teams that win will be the teams with the best plans. It might surprise you to know, but these last few minutes of the year are crucial for OUR CHURCH.

We are focused upon reaching our city for Jesus, and every gift given in the next few hours will better help us accomplish this! I am asking each of our members to consider making one last end-of-year gift. **You can give easily by going to** <http://ourchurch.org/give>.

We are set to have an amazing year in 2022, and your generous gift will not only help us finish this year well but set the stage for what is to come. **Please consider giving at** <http://ourchurch.org/give>.

Thank you for your generosity. The game OUR CHURCH is involved in makes an eternal difference because it is not a game. We are on the front lines of making a difference for the Kingdom! **Your gift now will help us accomplish this!** <http://ourchurch.org/give>.

Thanks for giving!

Your Pastor,

Want to start the year out right? Set up your 2022 giving to be automatic. You can schedule your entire 2022 giving to be easy, safe, and automated by following the recurring giving steps at <http://ourchurch.org/give>.

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Missions and Ministry Moment: Setting Up Your Offering

Every week we provide what are called offering talks. We have found that the easiest way to see an increase in giving is to improve how you approach the offering time. Instead of telling people they don't have to give, we like to show them what giving to a church accomplishes. By showing people your mission and ministry focus, you create a desire in your attendees to *want* to give to support that life change. That's why we call them Missions and Ministry Moments.

You can read them exactly how we write them or use them as idea starters for how the message would fit your culture and context. Our goal is to develop lifetime stewards, but we must get the first gift to begin them on the journey. Here is this week's offering talk.

The following Missions and Ministry Moment is for December 26.

The Best News of All

This coming Friday is New Year's Eve. **How many of you stay up until midnight on New Year's Eve? How many of you will go to bed at your regular time?** So, for those of you that do stay up past midnight, you will have all day Saturday to recover so you can be in next week's services!

This is our last Sunday of 2021. Can you believe that? We here at YOUR CHURCH NAME have not simply survived, we have thrived. In part because we believe in and proclaim the Good News of Jesus. So, no matter what the world's bad news is, we can always rejoice as we are doing this morning in worship. And as we always do, we want to give time to the act of worship by focusing on the offering.

I've got some good news about today's offering, then some even better news, and finally the best news of all. Are you ready?

The first good news is to tell you that today your gift to YOUR CHURCH NAME is tax-deductible even if you don't itemize your taxes. Congress again this year is allowing a tax-deduction for individuals of up to \$300 and up to \$600 for couples. So, be a good steward and take advantage of a tax break.

The better news I have for you is that we provide multiple ways by which you can give. You can give today or have your check postmarked by December 31st at midnight for a gift to count as a deduction for this year. Of course, the easiest and best way is to give online. Go to our website, www.ourchurch.org, and follow the easy advice.

The best news of all? It's the fact that your generosity to our church is helping us change lives one person at a time. Tax deductions are nice, but nothing compares to a life changed by Jesus Christ. With all the bad news we continually hear, it's good to have good news. The best news of all is that we have seen God move in incredible ways because of your generosity in 2021. With your continued generosity, we expect an even greater 2022!

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The following Missions and Ministry Moment is for January 2.

How to Fulfill Your Resolutions

How many of you made New Year's resolutions? How many of you have already broken them? Studies have shown that most resolutions get broken within days or, at best, weeks of their being made. So, if you have already broken yours, don't feel bad.

One reason keeping resolutions is so hard is that we forget. I can easily forget the resolution to lose weight when you set a pizza in front of me. If we could only put our resolutions on autopilot, we might better fulfill those resolutions.

Every week, we focus upon the act of worship through our giving. The Bible commands us to give, which is why we do this. Yet, we also want our motivation to be the love we have for God and our thankfulness for what He provides. We also try to share how your generosity helps fund all the life-changing work we do here.

So, we don't apologize for asking people to give generously. This morning I want you to consider one more resolution. Would you join many of us resolving to put God first in our finances and become faithful givers? You will be a blessing to many *and* be blessed in return.

And here is how you can fulfill that resolution: set your giving to be automatic through our recurring giving program. You can go to our website and look for the Give button that will direct you to give online and set those gifts up to be recurring. You can fulfill your resolution, but more importantly, your generosity will help make a difference in the lives of others.
