



The Stewardship Coach Volume 7 / Issue 1



What should you be thinking about *right now* in terms of making your budget in the New Year?
How to survive the first six weeks of the New Year! ***That*** is what you *should* be thinking about.

In my experience, the first six weeks of the New Year set the course for how the rest of the giving year will go. Do nothing, and I can assure you that six weeks into the New Year, **you will be behind your budget numbers by at least one offering.** That means you will be playing catch-up as you roll into your busiest time of the year.

That is what I have been thinking about as we start 2020. Has anyone else been thinking like this for you? Well, let me earn my keep and share with you some things you need to be thinking about.

First, I want you thinking about the fact that the giving trend for this time of year is one of moving from feast to famine! You just finished your most generous time of the year. Now, **get ready for one of your most challenging times of the year in terms of giving.**

There are many reasons for this. For one thing, people are taking longer than ever to get over the Holidays. Full attendance might not happen until later in January. Then, they start coming back right around the time their monthly credit card bill arrives. They have to start paying down all that Christmas spending. Then, there is the weather. It is not a matter of *if* the weather will impact one of your weekends, it's a matter of *when*.

The only other month worse than January in terms of giving is July. Not to blow my horn, but this is why years ago I wrote a manual called ***Six Weeks to Giving Success***. I knew I had to get churches focused to start the New Year or they would be behind and might never recover.

Let's do something about this! I am here to help you navigate through these next few weeks. Here is what I want you to do for the next six weeks:

Start strong to stay strong. You never have to recover from a good start! You want to start strong but,

Be realistic. It's a win to just get through the first six weeks. After that, you can evaluate if giving merits more aggressive spending, etc. Make sure your team understands this!

Anticipate the unexpected. Back to my point above about the weather, it's not *if* but *when*. Have a plan for the unexpected like my manual, ***Snowed Out***.

Plan and execute. Don't just read this and set it aside. Take action on this and make plans to navigate through these next six weeks. Speaking of plans,

Here are two easy things you can do immediately.

Encourage recurring giving. I have written about this for the last two weeks. Trust me, if you will do this, it will dramatically change your giving patterns.

Make every offering count. Plan out each offering. I would refer you to last year's edition, *The Anatomy of a Great Offering (Volume 6 Issue 30)*. I am going to write more on this next week.

How can we do this without it looking like all we talk about is money? I mean, after all, you did just finish an end-of-year giving push. Now here I come challenging you to put giving on everyone's plate again. Here is something to realize, *you* are feeling pressure about talking too much about money more than they are. Remember, they are only present half the time. You hear every appeal. They hear maybe half of your appeals, if that.

Yet, let's deal with how we can set the stage for giving without it feeling like pressure. Remember, my Brooks mantra, "To increase giving, we must make it *fun*, quick and easy." Fun means meaningful, impactful, life changing. That mantra leads to another one of mine, "Get a story, work your story, tell your story, and people will give to support that story." So, tell your story!

These first few weeks you can brag in Jesus' name about all that was accomplished last year. Then, you can point out all the amazing missions and ministry that will happen in the New Year. The more personalized you make the "story," the more apt they will be to give to support that "story."

Finally, I want to make sure you are thinking about having a "Just in Case" plan in place. Have a plan in place for when the weather impacts your offering. Don't let snow or ice put you a week behind. If you need a plan, email me and I will send you my manual, *Snowed Out*.

That is what I want you thinking about so, on day one, you will be ready. The time you spend on this *now* could be the difference between whether you make your budget in the New Year or not!

December 31st email blast? I wanted to put that on your radar and encourage you to send out one last compelling appeal to your donors. I have had churches I work with raise thousands of dollars in just a few hours doing this. Don't miss out on seeing the same type of offering help close your year out strong. Done well, you too could benefit from a similar appeal. Let me know if you need help on this.

Always remember, I am here to help you!



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Monday Mornings With Mark The Stewardship Coach will start again January 13th.

This Week's Offering Talk

Here is this week's offering talk.

Resolve to Put God First in Everything

How many of you have made New Year's resolutions? A recent article in *Inc.* magazine revealed that about 60% of us make resolutions but only about 8% of us are successful in keeping them.

Here are the top 10 New Year's resolutions, according to the survey of 2,000 people:

1. **Diet or eat healthier (71 percent)**
2. **Exercise more (65 percent)**
3. **Lose weight (54 percent)**
4. **Save more and spend less (32 percent)**
5. **Learn a new skill or hobby (26 percent)**
6. **Quit smoking (21 percent)**
7. **Read more (17 percent)**
8. **Find another job (16 percent)**
9. **Drink less alcohol (15 percent)**
10. **Spend more time with family and friends (13 percent)**

Any guesses as to how long those resolutions will last? More than half of those polled said they failed their resolution before January 31st.

I have a better resolution for you to consider today. Let's resolve to put God first in all things. Jesus said, "So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Let's resolve this year to put God first in giving. Let me suggest one key area where you need to put God first, your giving. We know God commands us to be generous and, frankly, that is a struggle for many. We worry that we might not be able to afford to give. Yet the words of Jesus are true that if we put God first, even in our finances, He will provide us all we need.

Let me share with you one way you can assure that God will always come first in your finances. Set up your giving to be automatic! Throughout the month of January, we will be highlighting recurring giving. You can simply go to our website at, **give your site address**, and follow the easy steps to set up your giving automatically. Then, whether you are here or away, you honor the Lord with the first fruits of your earning.

Our goal here is to make the giving process as easy as possible for you and setting up recurring giving is the easiest way of all. No matter how you give here, always remember that your generosity allows us to accomplish all we do. We can't do what we do without you!
