



Investing and Giving

Your money...matters...hopefully without it becoming your master...One way to break the hold of the mastery of money is to give.

I'm coming to believe we need a different mindset when we approach financial giving as opposed to investing our money with hopes of financial gain. Most of us in the western world invest some of our money now to have "more" later. We invest in IRA's, 401(k)'s, real estate, the stock market, our business, etc. We forego current lifestyle spending and defer (the gratification that kind of spending can bring) in order to provide for our future. So far, so good. Time for a question or two: ***Do I expect the same "return" on my charitable dollars that I expect on my investment dollars? Should I??? Or, is there a different kind of "return" when I give?*** Lately, I've been convicted that I have often conflated what I invest with what I give. I wholeheartedly believe that if I invest with an eye to my or my family's future, I do it with some sort of expected return. On the other hand, when I give to a non-profit...a gift is a gift...to expect a "return" is not congruent with making a gift. With a gift, shouldn't I ***give and not expect a return?***

Having said that, maybe there's a different "return" when I give. My wife and I listened intently (at times with tears on our cheeks) to story after story of changed lives. One man told of his "failure" to get to the end of a recovery program, only to come back to it several years later. He told of how what he thought he wanted wasn't really "it," and how he had to hit rock bottom to start the long, non-linear journey "upward," and how, for him, GRACE did change EVERYTHING. How can you measure the worth, the value, of these changed lives? Certainly not the way I measure my 401(k) "performance." Measuring changed lives takes a different kind of "tape measurer." I'm beginning to understand that this tape measurer is called, alternatively (or maybe both/and) "unconditional love," and/or "grace."

This has challenged me of late...Not placing expectations on my gift...THAT, for me, is a work in progress...