



CHRIST-CENTERED ESTATE PLANNING

*A wicked man puts on a bold face, but the upright gives thought to his ways.
Proverbs 21:29*

The first time that I sat through an estate planning session I was barely 18 years old. Our goals were simple, plan carefully how to transition the farm business to my brothers and I, set up a workable plan for my parents' retirement, and protect our selves from unforeseen financial troubles.

Needless to say, the Lord was good to my parents and coupled with frugality they were able to retire, watch their grandkids grow and were able to travel south for the long cold winters for 25 years.

That planning session long ago around the family table was important. While it was led by a secular insurance agent, it served a godly purpose. Namely to set up a plan to care for loved ones. Yet there was one very important element missing, there was no encouragement to give to the Lord.

How about you? Do you have an estate plan in place? If you do, does it need updating? Does it include a gift to the Lord? Statistics show that only 30% of Americans have developed an orderly plan for the transfer of their estates. Of the 30%, only one in three plan to remember a charity in those plans. In my experience, our church members would like to give but often have difficulty completing plans or setting gifts in place in order to give to Gospel ministry upon their passing.

Given the fact that all things belong to the Lord (*Psalms 24:1*) how can we as stewards faithfully manage our Lord's gifts and glorify the Lord through them? The beauty of planning is that as long as we live and have the ability and necessary help, we can plan. We can glorify the Lord and give thought to our ways, as the Proverb suggests.

That is why the Estate Planning Office has been established. It is a free service offered to our churches and their members to help you, the Christian steward, set up plans that will see to an orderly transfer of your estate as well as boldly plan to support the Lord's work both at home in your church and through your church's missions around the world.

What can you do to take advantage of this free service? First of all, take time to review your estate plan (you can take the short planning quiz provided below). Second, take time to use the planning tools available to you, (e.g. *Estate Planning for the Christian Steward* or the gift planning guide called *Different Ways to Give to the Lord*, or just visit with your giving counselor).

If the planning booklets are not available in the narthex of your church you can send a request to me. If I hear from you, I'll ship your requested information right away. Then, when all your plans are in place, let me know so that I can rejoice with you. Let's talk about the joys and challenges of the experience and maybe help others through the process as well. Let's work together to build a culture of giving in our church along with others from our synod.

Feel free to contact me at any time as you do. I hope to hear from you soon.

Contact Info:

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May the Lord bless you as you grow in the grace of giving.

Pastor Dan Basel

ELS Giving Counselor



Estate Planning Preparedness Questionnaire

Place a check mark beside each completed item that applies. Then total your score in order to rate your plan.

1. ____ I already have an updated Will or Living Trust and review it regularly. (15 points - only 10 if it has been more than 5 years since a review...)
2. ____ I have life insurance to help support my family in my absence or I am adequately funded to support them if I were to pass away. (5 points - Add 5 points if you review this yearly...)
3. ____ I have a living will and/or power of attorney for health care in place. (10 points)
4. ____ Disability questions: If I become incapacitated I have a “power of attorney” document in place so that someone I trust can make decisions for me. (10 points)
5. ____ Have I made provisions to care for a loved one in need of special care (Someone physically or mentally incapacitated). (10 points)
6. ____ I have made arrangements for special transfer of my business interest in case of my death or have made provisions to manage it in my absence for my family. (5 points - add 5 points if you have set up a charitable trust with your assets to save on capital gains taxes and set up a planned charitable gift)
7. ____ I know within about \$20,000 what my net worth is and have considered any death or inheritance taxes in my planning. (5 points - Add 5 points if using gifting instruments in this plan)
8. ____ I have remembered the Lord’s work in my planning and plan to give a portion of my estate to the Lord at the time of my death or after the death of my spouse or needy child. (15 points)

Total Score: _____

Planning Preparedness Score:

Excellent Planner: 70-90

Good Planner: 50 - 65

Fair - Needs Work: 30 - 45

Needs Serious Work: 0-25

REACTION TO SCORE:

____ “OUCH! I NEED A PLAN QUICK! HELP!”

____ “I have some gaps in my plan, help!”

____ “I want to plan a bolder gift than I have already. Let’s collaborate!”

____ “I’ve got to share what I’ve done with the giving counselor! He’ll be impressed!”

If you have any of these reactions, don’t hesitate to **call 507-469-9656**.
You can also find me on Facebook and use FB Messenger or text message to my phone.
FaceTime, Google Hangout, and Skype are also alternatives to a face-to-face meeting.

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