

The Christian's Estate Plan

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 to the church. 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.

Estate Planning for a Christian is recognizing that our responsibility to God does not end just because we are no longer able to physically manage our material possessions. This can come about as the result of either physical or mental incapacity or our physical death. This is why the most important aspect of the estate design process for a Christian is seeking God's plan of stewardship. It is His property; we are not owners but stewards.

But the Christian's estate plan cannot be carried out without proper planning. Without an estate plan, if disability or death occurs our estate (really what God has entrusted to us) will be managed and distributed according to state law, and that does not take into consideration our Christian values or responsibilities.

Have you considered a Christian Preamble to your will?

A Christian Preamble to Your Will

Your will becomes a public document upon your death. It is available for anyone to read. You can go right now to the probate court and review any deceased person's will. This fact provides you with an excellent opportunity to make a public statement about your Faith.

The following are some examples of what you might want to state in a Christian Preamble:

1. I do hereby testify that I am a Christian. I have placed all my hope of life hereafter in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. His death and resurrection have given my life meaning and make my death a peaceful passage to eternal life in heaven. I want my family and friends to know that for me to live was Christ, and to die is gain.
2. Rejoice with me as I declare my completed faith in Jesus Christ my Savior. I am totally convinced by faith that after this life of joys and sorrow, accomplishments and failures, I will live eternally in heaven. This is possible not because I have earned or deserved it, but because Jesus died in my place. I now live with him.

3. I want all who read this to know that there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that upon death I will enter heaven. I will do so, not by my own worthiness, but only through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Savior, who paid the price for my soul's redemption through his death on the cross. For me to live was Christ, and to die is gain. I commend my loved ones into the hands of the Lord and encourage them to place their faith and trust in him alone for their salvation.
4. I want all who read this to know that Jesus Christ is my Savior. I have no doubt about my being saved by him or my being in heaven. I ask my children, whom I love, never to forget the instructions Christ has given to us, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every nation." Share God's Word with everyone at home and abroad. May God grant you peace, love, and strength as he guides you through this life. Then at the end of time, we will be reunited in heaven as a happy family.
5. I commit myself to God's care, secure in his love for me and trusting in the salvation purchased for me through Christ's suffering and death. I leave those who survive me the comfort of knowing that I have died in this faith and have now joined my Lord in eternal glory. I commend my loved ones to the protecting arms of God, knowing that he will continue to provide for them despite my absence; and I encourage them to place their faith and trust in him alone.
6. I want all who read this to know that Jesus Christ is my Savior and that there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that upon death I will enter into heaven. I will do so, not by my own worthiness, but through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and his death on the cross.
7. I ask my children, whom I have loved so dearly to share God's word with everyone and to always remember how much you were loved. I commend you to the precious arms of God, knowing He will provide for you and I encourage you to place your faith in him alone, and never trust the world for your comfort. I look forward to seeing you all again in our life hereafter, where we will all live with our Lord and Savior.

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