

## **MAKING SOUND INVESTMENTS FOR THE NEW YEAR** **“Your Body—Investing for the Future” - I Corinthians 6:9-11, 19-20**

**INTRODUCTION** - It is the beginning of a New Year. We enter this year with hopes that it will be a prosperous year in more ways than merely financial.

If 2017 is to be a prosperous year for you, then now is the time to make sound investments that will enable this to happen. Mutual funds may be one area of investments, but it is also important for us to invest in our body, mind, spirit, and relationships. This is a holistic and Biblical approach to investing.

**THE PURPOSE OF INVESTING** - The first step in financial investing is often a trip to a counselor. Any financial counselor worth his or her salt will first ask, “What are your investment goals?” Most reply that they want to get rich. The counselor persists, however, in making the goal more specific. Is the purpose of their investments for college education, a retirement that includes travel, or a quiet retirement cabin on a mountain lake?

As we begin to talk about investing, it is important for us to determine the goal that we have for our investing. Today we look at the Christian’s goal for their body. The goal is identified by Paul’s words in our reading today; **“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?”** We are to invest in our bodies so that we might truly be temples of the Lord.

There are several characteristics of temples that we might want to keep in mind as we ponder Paul’s words and our investment intent.

“ **Temples are places of worship.** Our intention is to use our bodies in acts of worship—not only coming to Sunday morning services, but also in our work, our play, and our presence in the lives of others.

“ **Temples are places of sacrifice.** We sacrifice our personal, selfish desires and dedicate our lives to God’s goals and purposes.

“ **Temples are dwelling places for God.** We live so that God’s presence in our lives is evident to everyone we encounter. He referred to Himself as the temple that would be destroyed and raised in three days. And then, as He lives in us, we are the temple of God. We are the ones in whom His Spirit dwells. Our hearts become the “holy of holies.”

**THE MOTIVATION FOR INVESTING** - Once we have established our reason for investing, we are then able to move on to our motivation for investing. What will drive us to put in the time and effort to achieve our investment goals?

When it comes to our body, we may have many motivations. We may want to invest in our body for health reasons, or to lose some excess weight or build up our self-esteem. While these are all good motivations, they are not what drive a Christian to invest in his or her body.

The Christian motivation for investing in our bodies is contained in Paul’s words, **“You are not your own, for you were bought with a price.”** Martin Luther writes in his explanation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Article of the Apostles’ Creed that Jesus, “has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.”

Then, Paul concludes this section with the imperative, **“therefore, glorify God in your body.”** In other words, use your bodies in order that other people may see that you belong to God.

The cross of Jesus Christ is our motivation for whatever we do as Christians. The cost of our redemption and the depth of God’s love for us it what touches our hearts. The cross of Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection, well, that is the deepest of all motivations. It will last long after weight goals have been achieved and our self-esteem is secure.

**THE DO’S AND DON’TS OF INVESTING** - Paul has a short list of activities that he warns against. He reminds his readers that Christians and our bodies are not meant for sin. **(v.9-10)**

A survey by The Barna Group asked adults which, if any, of eight behaviors with moral overtones they had engaged in during the past week. The behaviors included looking at pornography, using profanity, gambling, gossiping, engaging in sexual intercourse with someone to whom they were not married, retaliating against someone, getting drunk, and lying. Of those surveyed:

- Twenty-eight percent had used profanity.
- Twenty percent had gambled.
- Nineteen percent had viewed pornography.
- Twelve percent had gossiped.
- Twelve percent had gotten drunk.
- Eleven percent had lied.
- Nine percent had engaged in sexual intercourse with someone to whom they were not married.
- Eight percent had retaliated against someone.

The results of the survey also indicated that younger generations are twice as likely to engage in immoral behavior than Baby Boomers. Younger participants were nine times more likely to engage in sex outside of marriage, six times more likely to have lied, three times more likely to have gotten drunk, three times more likely to have gossiped, twice as likely to have viewed pornography, and twice as likely to have engaged in some form of retaliation against someone.

An argument could be made that Christians have been set free from rules and regulations. Paul does not disagree with this argument. But, he simply points out that not everything that we are capable of doing is beneficial for us. He said, **“All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything.”**

At times it may be helpful for us to ask ourselves if we would treat our body like we do if it belonged to someone else. Instead of seeing our body as our possession that we can do with what we want, it may be helpful for us to remind ourselves that our body is God’s gift to us.

It is also helpful and empowering to focus on what we can do with our body rather than always concentrate on what we cannot do. We are called and empowered to serve God with our body, to minister to the needs of others, and to use our body for good. These are investments that will truly bring positive returns. (A great article by KB in Jan. newsletter about our resolutions)

## **CONCLUSION**

Our bodies are not to be ignored or neglected. The physical is not the antithesis to the spiritual.

Healthy bodies are platforms for meaningful service to God and to humankind. “So, glorify God in your body.” In the name of Jesus. Amen.