

COMPELLED: iNvest

Exodus 35:4-29; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Corinthians 3:16

MPS: Christians live compelled by God's love to iNvest their life in the body of Christ to build others up and send the gospel forth.

OBJ: Every person can understand the importance of iNvesting in the local church by five principles.

INTRO We are in a series entitled COMPELLED, considering God's love for us that grows a life of full devotion to live for Him. Compelled means that we "live as we've been loved." A life of full devotion is COMPELLED to live SENT.

The letters of the word SENT form an acrostic of four life postures to which the love of God compels our life. The first posture we considered was Surrender our lives. Last week we looked at the second posture, EXPEND our lives. Today we consider the third posture to live COMPELLED by God's love, iNvest.

Christians live compelled by God's love to iNVEST their life in the body of Christ to build others up and send the gospel forth.

VIDEO Caleb & Amy Fritz Testimony [4:46]

iNvesting in the church should be every Christian's priority because it is God's plan to accomplish His will on the earth.

TRANS What does Bible say about Investing your life in the church?

OBJ: I will draw from two primary passages today to consider five principles to guide the way we iNvest our lives to build others up and send the gospel forth.

READ Exodus 35:4-9, 10, 20-29

⁴Moses said to all the congregation of the people of Israel, "This is the thing that the LORD has commanded. ⁵Take from among you a contribution to the LORD. Whoever is of a generous heart, let him bring the LORD's contribution: gold, silver, and bronze; ⁶blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen; goats' hair, ⁷tanned rams' skins, and goatskins; acacia wood, ⁸oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, ⁹and onyx stones and stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.

¹⁰"Let every skillful craftsman among you come and make all that the LORD has commanded:

²⁰Then all the congregation of the people of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. ²¹And they came, everyone whose heart stirred him, and everyone whose spirit moved him, and brought the LORD's contribution to be used for the tent of meeting, and for all its service, and for the holy garments. ²²So they came, both men and women. All who were of a willing heart brought brooches and earrings and signet rings and armlets, all sorts of gold objects, every man dedicating an offering of gold to the LORD. ²³And every one who possessed blue or purple or scarlet yarns or fine linen or goats' hair or tanned rams' skins or goatskins brought them. ²⁴Everyone who could make a contribution of silver or bronze brought it as the LORD's contribution. And every one who possessed acacia wood of any use in the work brought it. ²⁵And every skillful woman spun with her hands, and they all brought what they had spun in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. ²⁶All the women whose hearts stirred them to use their skill spun the goats' hair. ²⁷And the leaders brought onyx stones and stones to be set, for the ephod and for the breastpiece, ²⁸and spices and oil for the light, and for the anointing oil, and for the fragrant incense. ²⁹All the men and women, the people of Israel, whose heart moved them to bring anything for the work that the LORD had commanded by Moses to be done brought it as a freewill offering to the LORD.

Exodus 35:4-9, 10, 20-29

1. iNvest originates from the heart to demonstrate God's spiritual work in life.

When Moses commands the people to iNvest in building the Tabernacle, he appeals to the heart. Jesus teaches that one's heart always reveals where their treasure rests. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." ^{Matt6:21} The work we do in every facet to serve God's Kingdom mission in the world demonstrates the work God is doing in our hearts. This

cannot be overstated, that the iNvestment one makes in the church always reveals that which is growing in the heart. [The way we iNvest in the church reveals God's work taking root and growing in us.](#)

Testimony [Chris & Lori Hyde](#) – Learning the value of investing in the church by one's conviction to tithe.

Talking about money in the church always evokes a diversity of responses. I learned early on in ministry, that addressing money is always a matter of the heart, not the pocketbook. So, when we discuss our annual budget, special needs or a campaign such as COMPELLED, I want us to focus on the gospel and Jesus' mission, because it's always a matter of the heart, of those who are of a generous spirit stirred by Holy Spirit for the work Jesus is doing. [A Christian iNvests in the church as an overflow of God's work in the heart.](#)

2. iNvest engages the whole life; time, talent, treasure and talk.

Exodus shows another important principle, that the work we do is all-encompassing of our life. People gave of their wealth and served from the natural ability of their life, and both were demonstrations of God's work in their heart because they served with passion. [God designed the church so that He would accomplish spiritual work through His people serving.](#)

God is honored when we give our time to participate in the life of the congregation. He is glorified when we utilize our talents, both natural ability, skills and expertise, as well as our giftings from the Lord to serve the church. God is glorified when we invest our life's treasure in the work and mission of the local church.

ILLUS Matt Solidum and Mike Wolfe are two great examples before us recently. Both of these men spend large portions of time serving LifePoint from their natural ability, skill and expertise. But that may NOT be their greatest impact in LifePoint. They both serve in capacities to disciple people as well, one leading a Community Group and another teaching children.

One more that not many think about. God is glorified when we are intentional to use our tongues to glorify Him and encourage and build one another up. The most fundamental strategy for God's mission in this world is the intentional use of the tongue, to both build up the church^{Eph4:15} and proclaim the gospel.^{Rom10:15} James makes very clear that the tongue is either an instrument for good and righteous purposes to bless, or it is a spark that always starts a forest fire, and a fang that injects deadly poison to curse.^{James3:1-12} The way we talk in the church directly impacts whether we invest to strengthen or damage the church. [Christian, every effort you expend, every minute you serve, every dollar you give and every word you speak holds the potential to move the mission forward and grow you up.](#)

[Christians iNvest in the church by our God-given gifting \(naturally & spiritually\), our God-given prospering, our God-honoring allocation and generosity, and God-glorifying encouragement.](#)

3. iNvest grows as one matures, and compounds spiritual growth in all of life.

ILLUS T-ball tee. In the greatest game ever invented, a "T" is used to teach the fundamentals of hitting, an important part of the game. You don't continue using it, but you never forget it. All hitting begins with this fundamental to grow and develops from here. You practice with it to sharpen the basics, but you only excel as you grow from it and not remain in it.

iNvesting in the church is very much the same. The fundamental practices and disciplines of the Christian life are not the sum total of one's life, but provide the firm foundation from which Christians mature and excel.

Spiritual maturity manifests itself in every area of life, but especially in our giving. Christians grow as we practice faithfulness in giving because it reveals that our heart rests in Jesus. [Treasure invested is a Heart rested.] Faithful giving is determined by the Principle of Proportion: "When we live out the love God has placed in us, we give 'according to' the way God has blessed us."^{2Cor8:3,12} Then, faithful giving serves as both a discernment of our heart, by showing where our heart rests, and as a diagnosis, by leading our heart to where it needs to trust when it wants to stray. This kind of faithfulness produces grows into generosity in giving.^{2Cor8:2-3} Sometimes we iNvest our treasure because God's love fills our heart. And

at other times we iNvest our treasure because we need to loosen our hold on this world and lead our heart to rest in Jesus. Both motivations to iNvest produce spiritual maturity in Christ-like character. The more maturity that is produced in us through iNvesting, the more readiness or desire we hold to give to complete God's work. Just as James 1:2-4 shows the path of maturity in character, so Paul's pathway in 2 Corinthians 8 demonstrates joy through maturity in stewardship. *Faithfulness in giving that leads to generosity, that fuels a readied desire to give and a commitment to finish the task is the progression of Christian maturity in stewardship.*

The way we give reveals the way we understand God's grace working in us. Our biggest challenge and problem with giving is that we see God's work as something disconnected from and 'other than' what He is doing spiritually in our life. But Paul identifies God's spiritual work in the Macedonians by their earnestness to give.^{2Cor8:1-4} He anchors his whole teaching on HOW they gave in response to God's grace, and culminates with the most all-encompassing promise in scripture.

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." **2 Cor 9:8**

The increase of God's grace grows faithfulness and generosity, as well as a readiness to give to complete His work that produces increasing joy because we are maturing in Christlikeness.

But there is an even greater benefit. A regular pattern of personal iNvest in the congregation produces compounded spiritual growth and maturity. When you iNvest in the church Jesus makes sure that you and others lack nothing and overflow with all things. The purpose of all iNvesting is personal and congregational. *One person's personal spiritual growth and maturity iNvested through the church compounds into the growth and maturity of many others. When you iNvest in the church, God blesses your whole life more than you could ever give away through our life.*^{2Cor9:10-15}

TRANS Just as iNvesting leads to growth and maturity, so the opposite proves true as well.

4. A failure to iNvest always leads to spiritual decay.

Failing to iNvest in congregational life in any of these areas leads to spiritual decay. This is not a threat or even a warning, but a fact. When your treasure is not in it, neither is your heart. And when your heart isn't in it, it can't get into your heart. There is no neutrality in the Christian life. You are either growing and maturing, or you are atrophying. *Lukewarm, neutral Christianity is always an offense to God's glory and a spiritual arrhymia to the person.*

TRANS Finally, and maybe the hardest to hear is the final principle.

5. Your iNvest proves why you are here.

Paul tells the Corinthians to prove the earnestness and genuineness of your love for Jesus by completing your commitment.^{2Cor8:8-15} Your investment may initially feel like more, but God promises that it will never end that way. When you iNvest in the local church, your personal investment will far outweigh your impact, outlast your influence and outlive your involvement. If LifePoint is to have 100 years of faithful, gospel ministry, we have to live and serve NOW with that aim in mind. *The way a person iNvests in the church provides the evidence that their life is surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.*

Just as Paul challenged the Corinthians, so today I encourage and challenge LifePoint to prove the authenticity of your faith and the genuineness of your love for Jesus by the generosity of your life. *Prove you are compelled by the way you live to iNvest your life in the local church.*

[*Note: Underlined you is plural. Bold **you** is singular.]

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you*? **1 Corinthians 3:16***

Check the footnote on this verse and you will find that the word "you" in verse 16 and 17 are plural. *Living as a follower of and growing into the image of Jesus Christ is never an individual pursuit, but a congregational investment.*

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you*** are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, ²¹in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. ²²In him **you*** also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. **Ephesians 2:19-22***

iNvest in the local church holds the most glorious compounded calculation for your life more than any other. **The principle of iNvesting in the church is simple: the more you iNvest in the church, the more Jesus will be vested into you.**

ILLUS Single mom who wanted to participate in her church campaign, but didn't have extra room in the budget above what she already gave to the church. When the pastor spoke of ways to serve, the only thing she could think of that she really knew how to do was bake bread. So, she decided she would make a meager commitment because she didn't want to overpromise what she could do. She started baking fresh bread to sell to people. Every night, instead of turning on the television when the children went to bed, she went into the kitchen for an hour or so and baked her bread. She did this for three years, and at the end of the campaign she gave over \$25,000 above her regular tithe and offering to her church. **Friend, that's a labor of love, a life that is compelled by love.**

APPL Next week we ask each person to make a commitment to God to give through LifePoint. I encourage you to pray this week and discern the level of giving to COMPELLED and complete a Commitment card next week. **[Commitment Card]**

CLOSE The reasons that rationalize why NOT to iNvest in the church are plentiful and multiplying. **The reason to iNvest that COMPELS is only one, Jesus Christ and him crucified.** As you consider how you iNvest your life, look to the cross of Jesus Christ to remember His sacrifice for you.

Christians live compelled by God's love to iNVEST their life in the body of Christ to build others up and send the gospel forth.

I pray without hesitation or reservation, "Lord, do this among LifePoint. Let us see the saving work of your hand by the way we live our lives to serve Your Kingdom mission with all of our lives as we iNvest."