

CONFORMED TO CHRIST

Review your investment portfolio

by Mary Sharon Moore

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In good years, just for fun, I occasionally like to review my net worth on paper—a 401(k) here, an IRA there, the savings account. But when the markets are not going well, I don't like to think about how financially shrunken I have become. You may feel the same way, too.

The start of the new year, the new decade, is the perfect time to revisit that investment portfolio, take an honest measure of your “financial worth,” and set in motion a plan to achieve your fullest financial stature.

Imagine having a similar concern for your spiritual investment portfolio. You have to put something in, for sure, for the value to grow. In fact, you have to invest yourself. Jesus was clear and even forceful on the matter. When the authorities of the law approached Jesus and asked him which was the greatest commandment, they wanted to know which was the safest investment, which one would yield the strongest return. But Jesus refused to play into their “safest bet and strongest ROI” mindset.

“You’ve got to invest your whole self,” he said in essence, “loving the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength—and your neighbor as yourself” (see Mark 12:28-31).

Jesus was smart about money. Just prior to these words, the scholars of the law tried to entrap Jesus on the question of paying taxes to the Roman government—a government of unwelcome occupation. “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s,” he told them, “and give to God what is God’s” (Mark 12:17). Money is

only money, Jesus might have said; it has limits. It’s not your God. Government is only government; it has limits. It’s not your God. If Caesar needs this money, give it to Caesar. It’s only money. There is a circle within which things belong to Caesar. It’s a surprisingly small circle. But give to God what belongs to God.

We, like those authorities of the law, might be thinking, “Hmmm, what doesn’t belong to God?”

To invest your very self means investing all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength in the one relationship that encompasses and shapes all other relationships, including your relationship with money.

The size and health of your spiritual investment portfolio is really the measure of your lifelong faithful response to God’s calling. In fact, the size and health of your spiritual investment portfolio tells you where you are vocationally with God and with the part of this world that you have been uniquely anointed to touch, care for, love, and cultivate for God.

How do you invest in your spiritual portfolio? Here are actions you can take: First, examine the foundations of your prayer life. Do you pray when you have time? Or is prayer the “generator” of your day, your planning and decision making, and your actions? If you feel too busy to pray, you’re actually too busy to not pray for guidance and strength in the press of all those endeavors.

Second, examine the quality of your prayer life. It's easy to pray for the same things you've always prayed for. Consider introducing some high-risk, high-yield prayer into your spiritual portfolio. Admit that you do not know how to pray as you ought and allow the Holy Spirit to pray through you with groanings you do not understand.

Third, enter into each new day, each new week, indeed this new decade, seeking

God's anointing that will empower you to accomplish not what you have in mind but what God has in mind. Perhaps you'll still be doing the same work, but notice what begins to shift. Alternately, you might discover God's desiring for a new path, a new calling.

No matter how your financial investment portfolio might be performing right now, God has plans for your spiritual investment portfolio. Work with it.

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