



REACHING AMERICA MINISTRIES

Church Implementation Guide for Why Give?

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1.

Introduction to the Why Give? book

Author John DeVries, previously wrote two books *Unexpected Joy* (1986) and , *The Grace of Giving* (2005). Both books related John's actual experiences and reflections as a pastor and as the founder of Mission India about the joy of giving.

Why Give? was first published in 2009 as a compilation of all his writings and experiences concerning the theme of giving. The major theme of the book is that we give because God is a giving God. Being created in His own likeness and image, we also give. But DeVries expands this to include a powerful image taken from Ezekiel 47 and John 7:38. God created us to be like rivers—"We are born again rivers". He goes on to explain that with the life of Christ flowing in and out of us we become living rivers of life. "Living to get instead of living to give results in sin and death. . .salvation is not a possession to be gotten, but a transformed condition in which we begin eternal living." The "fear over possessions gained or lost is the essence of hell itself. . .the more independent we are (with money) the more we shut the door to the streams of eternal life flowing through us." Instead of becoming life-giving rivers, we become stagnant ponds.

The book answers the following four questions:

1. What do we give?

Devries explains in his book that our living and giving provides seven wonderful things to the world. In other words, His love flows through us so that we can give. . .

- Give the gift of Christ's presence
- Give the power of Christ
- Give the provisions of Christ
- Give the perfection of Christ
- Give the resurrection of Christ
- Give the comfort of His reign
- Give the comfort of Christ's return

2. How do we give?

The author reminds us that giving is done with both the head and the heart. Not only does giving engage the emotions of the giver, but it also meets the actual needs of the person(s) to

whom we give. Giving with the head is focused, accountable, productive, transparent and joyous.

3. What is God's approach to giving?

God gives His gifts through us opening "the windows of heaven and allowing the rain of God's abundance to fall." DeVries makes two powerful observations:

- If our gifts seem small in our own eyes compared to the overwhelming challenge, we set up an opportunity to see God's multiplying work in meeting the need and resupplying our limited resources.

- If God is to be honored by the gift, the gift must be significant to the giver.

4. What are the results of giving?

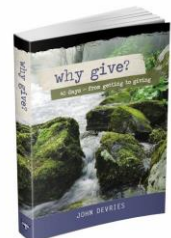
Giving unlocks God's infinite resources. If we give in order to get for ourselves, we succumb to the heretical "prosperity theology" of the day. The end result of giving is. . .

- We receive more in order to give more. . .
- We experience joy. . .
- We become more like God. . .
- We experience sympathy for others. . .
- We discover God's infinite resources. . .
- We connect with the grace of God that inspires more giving, motivating others to give

40-day devotional

The Why Give? book is divided up into 40 days of meditations with reflection/discussion questions at the end of each meditation. The final five days are given as a review of the five weeks. The themes for the five weeks are:

- Week 1: **We are born again to be rivers, not lakes**
- Week 2: **We give the seven gifts of Christ**
- Week 3: **Our giving is God's opportunity to give**
- Week 4: **We give because our giving enables others to give**
- Week 5: **Biblical giving results in joy**



2. **Objectives of using Why Give? in a Church Stewardship Emphasis**

One of the major principles of Reaching America Ministries is to teach God's Word in such a way that its message can be put into practice and shared with others. In order to know something we must first "discover the truths" which means we must understand the subject and know its parts. The second stage of mastering a lesson is to use the knowledge in a practical way by "doing it"—what we learn must be translated into action. The last command Jesus gave his disciples was to "make disciples, teaching them to (do) everything I commanded." Merely knowing something in our head is not enough. We must translate what we know into conduct. The third stage of mastering a lesson is to "deliver it to others" by sharing what you have learned with someone else. In sharing you are teaching the lesson to someone else.

Objective #1

That the truths of God's Word about "the heart of giving"—which is at the very heart of God—be fully explained. Members of all ages should be able to understand the following five themes of giving presented in this book:

- a. Being born-again is like being filled with living water flowing out from our lives as a mighty river.
- b. The living water that flows from our lives delivers seven gifts of Christ to others:
 - Jesus' Presence
 - Jesus' Power
 - Jesus' Provision
 - Jesus' Perfection
 - Jesus' resurrection
 - Jesus' reign
 - Jesus' return
- c. When we allow the Lord to give these gifts through us, He not only multiplies the results of our giving, but also the resources needed to give even more.
- d. Our giving must be mindful, in other words, we give not to degrade others but to dignify them. Giving to others must have the primary purpose of enabling others to give.

- e. As a study of 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, there are seven wonderful dimensions of joy we experience when we give:
 - a. The joy of giving comes from being like God.
 - b. The joy of giving starts in sympathy for others.
 - c. The joy of giving is in discovering infinite resources.
 - d. The joy of giving comes from within.
 - e. The joy of giving comes from Christ's example.
 - f. The joy of giving comes from motivating others to give.
 - g. The joy of giving comes from God's grace which produces giving.

Objective #2

The second way to master a lesson is by using the material in a practical way. This can best be achieved when using the **Why Give? Journal** along with the books. The Journal can be easily downloaded from the RAM website and distributed to church members.

We suggest that your church first designate a special cause for which monies can be collected during the 40 days. Perhaps the cause is to support the RAM County by County Project. Or, it is to begin a special fund to support foreign missions such as Mission India. Make it clear that this fund is not to replace church member's weekly tithes and offerings. What will be collected is unexpected income.

The following introduction comes from the **Why Give? Journal**

God has extra money hidden in unexpected places for you to use in building his kingdom. He has also hidden, in these six weeks, the treasure of special opportunities to serve others. These are the treasures about which Jesus talked. As you find this money and give it to bring the Gospel to others, and as you find opportunities to serve and help others, you will be "investing in eternity." These funds will be placed in heaven's bank where moth and rust cannot destroy, and thieves cannot get at them.

But there is another aspect to seeking these treasures for you to recognize in addition to the security aspect. You will be drawing amazing interest on this treasure. *Why Give?* teaches how God will multiply the treasures you invest in the kingdom. These treasures of money and service opportunities are not only safe for eternity, but also will be multiplied, beginning now, beyond "anything you could ask or imagine!"

Your treasure hunt goal is to find two types of treasure, **extra money and extra service opportunities**, and to use them to start "streams of living water." Being born again means experiencing transformation from being a selfish swamp to being a source of selfless streams of love and life. Jesus tells us that whoever believes in him, from within that person will flow torrents of "living water" (John 7:38-39).

God will guide you in this 40-day treasure hunt through "listening prayer." Those who have gone through the *Why Pray?* book and Prayer Journal know that prayer is not a monologue, but is instead a dialogue with the Father who longs to direct us, correct us, encourage us, and challenge us in very specific ways. Our challenge is to know how to listen to him and then to obey him.

Each day begins with a key verse which will prepare you to listen to the Lord. Then, you will be challenged to ask the Lord to reveal to you the condition of your heart. David prayed in Psalm 139:23-24: *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* We need help in seeing the stagnant pools of selfishness still residing in our hearts. Sin and

self-seeking ambition blinds us from enjoying our greatest treasure, our source of purest pleasure -Jesus. It also blinds us from seeing all the treasures God regularly puts in our lives that are to be used to bring forth streams of living water.

On the bottom of each day, there is space for participants to record how the Lord led them that day, or the previous day, in a new opportunity for giving to others. It also asks for participants to consider any unexpected income that the Lord gave that day—income which can be given to the church's special fund.

“God’s Treasure Hunt for today”

1. I found an extra \$ _____ that I really didn't need for myself, bringing my total for the 40 days so far to: \$ _____
2. I discovered these treasures of service opportunities:

There are examples from a church near Chicago that went through this giving experience. Those stories can be found in the “Sermon and Worship Ideas” folder that can be downloaded from the RAM website. But there is a powerful story that author John DeVries shares in the Why Give? Journal which is included below.

I was one of those students years ago who accepted your challenge to hunt for \$20 that God had hidden. I was a very slow learner. I just couldn't seem to find that \$20 even though God put it right in front of my nose three times!

During the first week, my friend asked me to help him with a job for a morning, and he gave me \$20. I immediately spent it. When I prayed the next Sunday for \$20, the Lord reminded me of the unexpected \$20 my friend had given me, which I had wasted on some unnecessary personal thing.

So I again asked him to give it to me in the second week. That week a friend approached me and said, 'Remember that twenty bucks I borrowed from you four years ago? I never paid it back. Here it is.' I was thrilled to have that extra money. I felt I really needed it, and I spent it. The next Sunday, as I prayed for the \$20, God again reminded me that he had already given it to me. Now I was really shook up!

I prayed again, asking God please to have patience with me and to give it to me a third time, but to do it in a way that really was startling. I pled for patience and the ability to see where his treasure was. He answered again. It was my birthday that week, and I got a birthday card from someone who had NEVER before given me a card, much less a gift. You guessed it...there was a \$20 bill in it!

The young man went on to say that this experience had totally changed his life and giving pattern. It launched him on a lifetime of treasure hunting; this consisted of daily prayer asking Jesus to show him both the financial treasures he was putting in his hand to start streams of living water, and the treasures of service opportunities.

Objective #3

The final objective in mastering any lesson is the ability to share it, or even teach it to others. Here are a few ways churches can encourage members to share the lessons.

- a. Each week as you meet together as a family or small group, share some of the interesting stories of engaging in God's Treasure Hunt. What did you find during the week? How did you find it? Share the total treasure you found as a group or as a family.
- b. At the end of the 40 days, or even each week, provide an open mic in a church service for members to share their own experiences of God's provision and unexpected income. Make it a time of testimony giving praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.
- c. Invite members to write out their own stories of how the Lord provided unexpected income, or opportunities for service. Or, write out in their own words how their understanding of giving and stewardship were changed during the 40 days. Compile these stories and testimonies into a little booklet to be distributed in the church. Let these accounts encourage members for years to come.
- d. Post a daily church blog for members to respond to and share their own thoughts about each day's reading of Why Give?

3.

Steps for planning and implementing Why Give?

Step 1:

As a church leadership staff or; with a special planning committee involving the pastor, worship and outreach leaders, determine a date in the church calendar year when to start this emphasis. Here are some suggestions:

- a. Kick off the fall season using the “Why Give?” materials. Many churches with small group ministries need new materials for the fall season. Some churches form new small groups or even new Sunday school classes in this part of the church calendar year. The Why Give? Journal comes with six different small group sessions that can even be used for teen/adult education classes.
- b. Use this Church Giving Emphasis during the Lenten season. We have included sample sermons and services in the “Sermon and Worship Ideas” folder which were used by a church during the Lenten season.
- c. Start the campaign on Resurrection Sunday and end it on the Sunday following Christ’s Ascension (a 40 day period). Or, introduce the materials the week following Resurrection Sunday and conclude it on Pentecost Sunday.

We urge the planning staff or committee preparing this church-wide emphasis to bathe both the planning and implementation with fervent prayer! All hell shutters with fear and contempt when God’s people pray. You will face opposition as Satan tries to discourage and cause divisions even among your planning team. Ask the members of your church to keep you in daily prayer before, during and well after this church renewal experience.

Step 2:

After you have decided when to start the Why Give? Emphasis, you need to make decisions about what materials you are going to use and how you are going to use them. The following are examples from two different churches:

Trinity Church- (fall season)

Dates: Oct. 6- Nov. 17

- a. Sign-up for new small groups took place (September 8-29th)
- b. Bulletin announcements and the church web page highlight the upcoming “Why Give? Stewardship Emphasis during the month of September and throughout the 40 days.
- c. Sunday October 6, the Why Give? Emphasis began with an introductory sermon on the theme of “An Ever Giving God”. Church members were invited to pick-up a copy of the Why Give? book and were asked to read Day 1.

***This church provided one free copy of the Why Give? book to every household, but asked members (who were able) to purchase a downloadable version of the Journal from the Reaching America web site.**

- d. Small groups in this congregation meet weekly, many on Sunday nights. On this first Sunday night or weekly meeting, the small groups met and considered the theme of Day 1 by asking the questions found in the Why Give? book. On the following Sundays of the Why Give? Emphasis, the small groups used the questions provided at the end of each section of the Why Give? Journal. Small groups also shared with each other how the Lord provided unexpected giving and kept each other accountable.

(The same concept could be adapted for Sunday school classes)

- e. On the last Sunday of the emphasis, the worship service included two powerful testimonies from members of the congregation of how God answered their prayers in the past 40 days. Since it was near Thanksgiving Day, the congregation met for a meal that Sunday evening, and as part of the program for that evening meal, a representative of each small group was given an opportunity to share how the Lord provided unexpected income and opportunities for service within their group.

First Church-(Lenten season)

Dates: March 3-April 14

- a. Bulletin announcements and the church's web site highlighted the upcoming Why Give? Stewardship Emphasis and there was a huge display in the lobby of the church with samples of the Why Give? Book and Journal (printed form from web site download).
- b. Sunday March 3, the Why Give? church-wide emphasis began with the morning message introducing the theme of the book. Church members were invited to pick-up their copies of the Why Give? book from the church lobby. Thirty copies of the Why Give? book and printed copies of the Journal were kept out for the church's Youth Group. The Youth Pastor wanted to teach the kids about the joy of giving. He also used the small group discussion questions for their weekly small group gatherings.

***This congregation purchased enough Why Give? books so that every household could have at least two copies. Members were asked to sign-up for any additional copies.**

- c. Small groups in this congregation meet once a month. They used the six sets of discussion questions for their monthly meetings which gave them materials to use through August. Even though members of the small groups had completed the 40 days along with the other members of the congregation, their small group times extended the emphasis of giving past the 40 days.

- d. On Sunday April 14 (Resurrection Sunday) the pastor asked a member to share her unique experience of going through the book and discovering how the Lord provided for her beyond her own imagination.

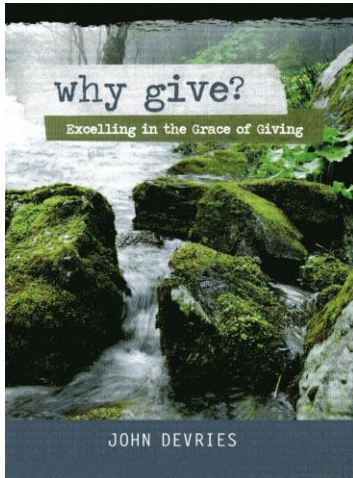
Step 3:

An important part of the "Why Give?" Giving/Stewardship Emphasis is follow-up and celebration. When members begin to experience God's amazing provision and unexpected income, the church should provide ways for members to share their excitement with others. (See Objectives #3)

If the church had established a special fund for a mission project or some other cause prior to the 40 days, there should be a special service of thanksgiving. At this service, members could offer up the unexpected income the Lord gave to them during the 40 days. Additionally, this service could also be a time of recommitment in serving the Lord. Members could be asked to write on a slip of paper what new or old opportunities for service the Lord revealed to them during the 40 days. Along with the unexpected income, members could offer both to the Lord during that special service.

4.

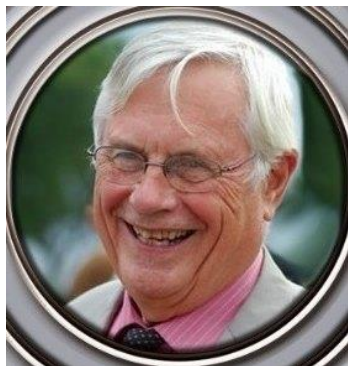
Materials for a Why Give? Church-Wide Giving Emphasis



Why Give? books. For orders of 10 or more (\$5.00) plus shipping and handling. Orders may be placed by phone at (616) 554-7997 or online at www.reachingamerica.net The kindle version is available from the Reaching America web site and from Amazon for (\$3.99).



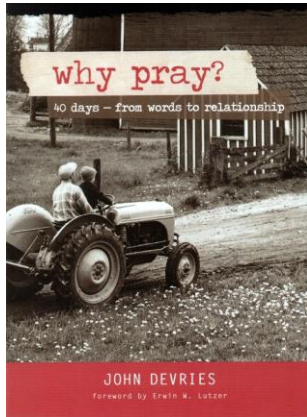
Why Give? downloadable journal. See the resource page on the Reaching America.net web site. Churches and groups are permitted to photo-copy up to 10 copies per download.



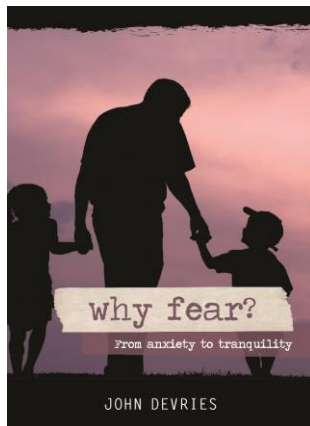
Video segments. Author John DeVries gives 5-five minute video introductions for each week. These brief clips can be used during a worship service or in a small group setting to introduce the theme for each week.

The DVD is \$5.00 and can be purchased from the [Reaching America.net](http://ReachingAmerica.net) web site.

Other books by author John DeVries



Why Pray? This book is nearing record sales and distribution across the USA. Lead your congregation in experiencing the power and the presence of the Lord in prayer in these 40 day devotionals. Check out the Reaching America web site for additional resources for Why Pray? as part of a 40 day church-wide prayer emphasis. Downloadable "Implementation Guide" and "Sermon/Worship Ideas" folder are also available.



Why Fear? Lead your congregation in experiencing the peace of trusting the Lord as Shepherd with these additional 40-day devotionals by author John DeVries. Check out the Reaching America web site for additional resources for Why Fear? as part of a 40 day church-wide emphasis on how to be free from fear. . . and then share that freedom with others! Downloadable "Implementation Guide" and "Sermon/Worship Ideas" folder are also available.

5.

What is Reaching America Ministries?

Reaching America Ministries, formerly known as Project Philip Ministries, and our publishing division, **Ephesians 3:20 Publishing**, were founded by Dr. John DeVries, and exemplify his missional principles based upon Acts 8.

1. Spiritual Experience- We believe that a growing relationship with the Lord Jesus, creates joy, peace, and provides a life purpose of longing to share this experience with others, and to explain the message of God's Word in clear and appropriate ways. (Acts 8:8,31)
2. Saturation Evangelism-We believe the Great Commission calls every Christian and every Church to blanket their neighborhoods and cities with the Gospel message until all hear the good news. (Acts 8:4; 19:10)
3. Spontaneous Expansion-We believe true discipleship creates new communities of believers in relationships that foster spiritual growth, selfless love, and exuberant joy shared with family, friends, and neighbors (Acts 8:39)

Who are we?

1. A non-denominational ministry working with a variety of evangelical churches, denominations, and city-wide groups to equip them to saturate their ministry area with prayer and God's Word.
2. A ministry with a vision to see every home in the USA prayed for and reached with the seed of the Gospel message.
3. A ministry providing proven material and methods used around the world for over 40 years.
4. A ministry that supports the vision by publishing inexpensive books, Bible studies, and outreach materials through its publishing division, Ephesians 3:20 Publishing.
5. A 501 c (3) non-profit ministry