

EXTENDING THE KINGDOM OF GOD...ONE PERSON AT A TIME

ONE-TO-ONE

Summer 2008 ®

the *“Do all that is in your heart...I am with you.”*
armorbearer

HOW TO EXPERIENCE VICTORY IN THE FACE OF OVERWHELMING OPPOSITION



Contents

Summer 2008



3 FROM THE EDITOR

New Ways of Communicating

CSM Continues to Expand Options for Equipping, Encouraging, and Networking Believers

4 FEATURE

The Armorbearer

How to Experience Victory in the Face of Overwhelming Opposition

BY CHARLES SIMPSON



8 CONTRIBUTING MINISTRIES

Find a Church!

10 FAMILYGRAM

"To Life!"

A Tribute to Carolyn Simpson

BY STEPHEN SIMPSON

12 MARKETPLACE EXCHANGE

How Will You Handle Your Next Dollar?

An Interview With MARK BILLER

BY JONATHAN SIMPSON



feedback

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EDITORIAL AND PUBLISHING STAFF

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Editorial Director: Stephen Simpson
Technical Editor: Susanne Simpson
Creative Services: Steven Tyrrell

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NEW WAYS OF communicating

CSM continues to expand options for equipping, encouraging, and networking believers By Stephen Simpson

THIS SUMMER, CSM CELEBRATES 39 YEARS OF PUBLISHING, DATING back to the launch of **New Wine** Magazine. Many of you reading this have been with us since the beginning—and even longer. But there are also thousands of you who have come on board in recent years, and there are untold thousands more who we want to reach.

That is why we are doing all we can to keep up with cutting edge technologies and innovative media in order to better fulfill our call to equip Christians who build churches that disciple nations; to extend the kingdom of God, one person at a time. One major step was retooling our CSM website at **csmpublishing.org** and adding many new features and content, and making it more interactive and user-friendly.

For instance, the aforementioned *New Wine* Magazine was made available last year online for the first time ever...and for free! We have almost completed the scanning process of our issues; 1969-1982 are now online, and

we're working towards having all of the archives completed, through 1986. It is a time-consuming and expensive process, but we have made great progress.

Another exciting development is the **"Time Out With Coach"** series, featuring concise and intensely practical life teaching tips from "Coach" Charles Simpson. Season One (ten sessions) is now available, both as an online audio download and now as a three-CD set. Issues such as **"Courage," "Team," "Control,"** and **"Consistency"** are dealt with

Scripturally and personally in Charles

Simpson's unique way.

Our very first e-book, **"Army Ants and Vines"** by Charles Simpson is now available as an exclusive online download. This is a dynamic look at the power of the organic Church, and reflects not only more than 50 years of personal pastoral ministry, but also a powerful vision for the future of Christ's Body in the world...and your part in it.

One very lively corner of the CSM website is our News and Discussion Forum, which can be accessed through our main homepage or directly through **csmpublishing.org/discuss**. This is a place where you can keep up with regularly updated news about CSM, or just stay in touch with some of your other friends from the CSM community around the world. It's one place where, together, we can "make the net... work!"

Registration for the Forum is free and easy, and there are many interesting and relevant topics being discussed right now...we'd

love to have you jump right in, make comments, or even start a topic of your own. It's the place online where CSM staff and friends gather for fellowship, encouragement, and updates.

So, if you want to keep up with what's happening through CSM around the world; if you want reviews of recent movies and books; if you want to know how to reach youth; if you want to discuss Post-Modernism in the Church; if you would like to share your favorite Praise and Worship songs; if you have personal, family, or ministry news to share; or if you want to have a rollicking discussion about the best burgers in the world or sports, then you'll find it all in the CSM Forum. And, all participants can receive free ministry resources, such as teaching messages from Charles Simpson.

We love coming into your home through the quarterly issues of *One-to-One* and the monthly Pastoral Letters from Charles Simpson. But, in this age of instant communication, we want to expand your options for receiving relevant ministry resources and networking with other believers. We look forward to seeing you online! **121**

Stephen Simpson is ministering in Michigan, August 12-18. Contact CSM for more info.

Stephen Simpson is the Editor of *One-to-One* and Senior Pastor of Covenant Church of Mobile. He is also available for ministry in your city. For more information, contact Betty Duke: bettydukecsm@aol.com / (251) 633-7900.

HOW TO EXPERIENCE
VICTORY IN THE FACE
OF OVERWHELMING
OPPOSITION



the armor

BY
CHARLES
SIMPSON



“ Do all that
is in your heart...
I am with you ”

(see 1 Samuel 14:7). With these words a
major victory was won in Israel's battle
against the Philistines.

LEADERS CANNOT ACCOMPLISH very much alone, no matter how strong or intelligent they may be. They need others who carry their vision, are committed to their strategy, are willing to share the danger, and watch their leader's back. This story involves such a person who played a key role in a significant victory that Israel won over the Philistines—against overwhelming odds. He was an armorbearer. Like most such people, he remains nameless, but his role was vital.

The story happened eleven hundred years before Christ, but the principles have not changed.

Moses and Joshua had been great leaders, but after their tenure, Israel fell into a long decline of disunity and finally moral chaos.

Finally, the people began to ask for a king like other nations had. So, Samuel, the prophetic leader of the people found a man whom he ordained as king. Much more could be said about the process, but the Lord gave the people what they desired, though it wasn't the highest purpose for them.

The king's name was Saul, and he looked the part: head and shoulders taller than other men, a good man, and reluctant to accept the job; nevertheless, the Lord anointed him. His previous experience was working for his father herding donkeys; an unlikely preparation for royalty,

The Philistines responded with 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen. It was a major problem! The mood among the Israeli army drastically deteriorated. Another major problem was that the Israelis had few weapons. They had even

The celebration was short lived. The Philistines responded with 30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen.

depended upon the Philistines to sharpen their tools. Saul's 3,000-man army soon became 600 men trapped and trembling. The deserters ran away and hid.

Saul was now desperate, grossly outnumbered, and left with an

beaarer

Judges 17:6 characterizes this period as, "Every man did what was right in his own eyes." A more modern expression would be, "Do your own thing", "Do what is right for you", or "Look out for number one." The result in Israel was self-serving gratification and fragmentation.

There was another result: Israel fell under the domination of the Philistines. The Promised Land of milk and honey became a nightmare. Various leaders like Samson and Gideon arose, but none could permanently unite the people and reverse the moral tide.

though in some ways foretelling of his task.

Saul reigned one year, but Israel was still oppressed. He gathered 3,000 men to fight against their oppressors, the Philistines. He assigned one thousand of those men to his son, Jonathan, who proved to be more courageous and effective than his father. Jonathan led a successful battle against the Philistines. When Saul got the good news, he celebrated with blowing the trumpet. The word went out that Saul had won the victory.

The celebration was short-lived.

inexperienced and frightened army; he decided to do something religious. He sent for Samuel, who had anointed him to be king, so that sacrifices could be offered. But alas, Samuel was late in arriving. The priest who remained with Saul was Ahijah, nephew of Ichabod. You might remember Ichabod; his name means "the glory is gone." Indeed it was.

Saul pressed on and offered a sacrifice, something that he was not authorized to do. Just as he concluded, Samuel showed up and openly rebuked him. Furthermore,

Samuel told Saul that his lineage would not continue to rule after him due to his disobedience. Then Samuel left the camp.

Meanwhile Philistine raiders were plundering and causing havoc. Things could not have been worse for Israel.

JONATHAN AND THE ARMORBEARER

Someone else decided to leave the camp—Jonathan. The hopeless situation motivated him to be bold and take action. He and his armorbearer quietly left the area unnoticed. They made their way through a narrow crevice between two cliffs; at the top of on cliff was an enemy garrison—the military men assigned to protect Philistine interests.

Jonathan spoke to his armorbearer, “Let’s go over to these Philistines, maybe the Lord will work for us. He is able to deliver by many...or by few.” Actually, Jonathan called them “uncircumcised Philistines,” meaning they were not covenant people.

The danger was evident: The climb up the face of the cliff would be treacherous and exhausting; when they reached the top they would be vastly outnumbered. But, this armorbearer’s heart was with his leader, and the leader was waiting for the answer.

“Do all that is in you heart; I am with you.” Jonathan’s faith and courage were matched by the armorbearer. The two would act as one. Covenant, courage, and faith attract God’s attention. Every leader needs such support if victories are to be won. Israel was desperate for such leadership and courage...so is the Church.

STRATEGY

“We will cross over to the Philistines and let them know that we are here. If they say, ‘Wait and we will come to you.’ We will wait here. If they say, ‘come up to us’, then we will go up; that will be a sign to us that the Lord has given them into our hands.”

So, Jonathan and his armorbearer showed themselves to the enemy. The Philistines were surprised, “Look, the Hebrews have come out of the holes where they have been hiding. Come up here and we will show you something!”

Jonathan turned to his armorbearer, “Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into our hands.” So they climbed up the cliff as the gleeful Philistines waited. But as Jonathan and the armorbearer reached the top, the ground began to shake; the Philistines fell into terror and confusion, and then Jonathan and his friend advanced to destroy the enemy. Twenty Philistines fell within a half acre.

Meanwhile back at the camp, Saul and his leaders were still talking as the watchmen noticed the tumult on top of the hill. Jonathan and the armorbearer were continuing to advance against the Philistines. Finally, Saul stopped talking and called his

troops into the battle. Those who had been hiding took heart and joined. First Samuel 14:23 concludes the episode saying, “The Lord saved Israel that day.”

I believe the story as it was written. There have been many times in history when God intervened in the affairs of men to dramatically effect outcomes. The defeat of the Spanish Armada or the events at Dunkirk come to mind. In 1968, I visited Israel and saw the remains of the Six-Day War from 1967. Israel had been vastly outnumbered and attacked on three sides, but won decisively in only six days. There were many stories of miracles during those battles.

Here are a few significant lessons:

LIFE LESSONS



- Leaders need courageous and committed support in order to succeed.
- Leadership requires more than a good image.
- Leaders should not “blow the trumpet” or take credit for someone else’s success.
- Real leaders will not sit still and wait to die when bold action is required.
- Real leaders know that when they act, they will need God’s help.
- Wise leaders ask for commitment before they act.
- Wise leaders do not rely on religious activity for deliverance.
- Wise leaders understand that the enemy is not invincible.
- Wise leaders remain flexible in strategy.
- Real leaders understand that when the time comes, they must risk everything.
- Armorbearers are those who are willing to take all the risk without concern for acclaim or to be “number one”.
- Leaders and armorbearers do not quarrel with cowards, because cowards will join them once victory becomes apparent.

There are also many other lessons that we can learn from Israel's culture. When a society fragments, there are spiritual, psychological, and philosophical reasons for it. Radical individualism, or placing the priority on self interest over the common good, or self-indulgence over self-discipline are formulas for decline (see Judges 17:6). And leaders who pander to interest groups or to personal indulgence are not leaders at all, they are enablers of destruction.

Another lesson one could gather is that religion in itself does not move God to help, nor does offering sacrifice (see Hebrews 10:5-7). What God is seeking is those who are willing to do His will. The sacrifice He

especially our children. Pacifism in the face of a hostile and brutal tyranny is criminal. The bold among us will not long abide some relative of Ichabod during incantations over a defeated group.

More and more youth are turning away from an unchallenging Church. Some are finding their contests in sports, even extreme sports. Others are volunteering for the military, but more are hiding in drugs. There are Jonathans and armorbearers out there if the Church can discover them and point them to the battle.

Our youngest son was named after Saul's son, Jonathan; and our oldest son after another courageous New Testament character,

"More and more youth are turning away from an unchallenging Church. Is there not a cause? Indeed there is!"



Stephen. Our son Jonathan recently out to a former "Hell's Angel" gang member over a period of months, led him to the Lord, and baptized him. There are many potential "Jonathans" and "armorbearers" out there yet to be reached and disciplined.

When Eliab, David's older brother, challenged David over his desire to fight the giant, David responded, "Is there not a cause?" Indeed there was, and is! The cause is clear, "go into all nations and make disciples...." That call and commission was issued by the "captain of the Lord's armies." (See also Joshua 5:14-15; Romans 9:29; James 5:4.)

seeks is the sacrifice of our will in favor of His will. When we make that sacrifice, He gets involved.

THE CALL

Military stories are probably out of season for most people. Nevertheless, we face a militant secularism at home and a militant form of Islam abroad. Our valuable resources are being raided—



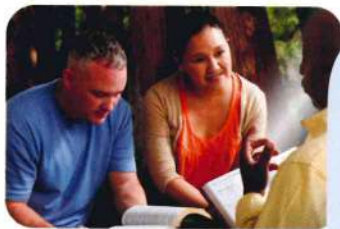
Our Lord Jesus trained disciples who became spiritual armorbearers. One of them, Peter, had to learn to put away his sword, but finally became a powerful force against the real enemy (see Matthew 26:52). The apostle Paul says in Ephesians 6:12, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, powers, rulers of darkness, spiritual armies of wickedness." Many Christians could stop at the first three words of this quote, "we wrestle not...."

But, most of us do have to wrestle in some arena and we need God's help. I want to encourage you to be bold, exercise faith, and do not wait for defeat to find you. I would encourage you to also pray for an armorbearer to stand with you in the conflict. Perhaps the best way to have a real armorbearer in our battles is to first be one for someone else. Be able to say to your leader, "Do all that is in your heart; I am with you!" ¹²¹

Editor's Note: See page 9 for Charles Simpson's 2008 Ministry Itinerary.



Charles Simpson is Editor-In-Chief of One-to-One Magazine. He ministers extensively throughout the United States and among the nations.



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CSM'S DIRECTORY OF CONTRIBUTING MINISTRIES

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KINGSTON CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
P.O. Box 26015, 732 Milford Dr., Kingston,
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David Thompson, Pastor
E-mail: thomp@kingston.net

Alabama

COVENANT CHURCH OF MOBILE
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(305) 235-4471 • Elkin Espinal, Pastor
Website: www.caris.org

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Church: 25505 SW 126 Ct., Princeton, FL
33032 | Mailing: P.O. Box 924394 •
Homestead, FL, 33092-4394 • (305) 258-
2820, Joseph Holbrook, Director
E-Mail: josephholbrook@miamiteam.org

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www.gracechapel.com

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Georgia

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31410 • (912) 897-6630
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www.folc.net

Iowa

MASON CITY COVENANT CHURCH

Church: 2402 S Federal Ave., Mason City,
IA 50401 (641) 424-6339 • Mailing:
6 Hampshire Ct. • Mason City, IA 50401
William Backlin, Pastor
E-mail: backlin6@mchsi.com

RIVER OF LIFE CHURCH

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Bettendorf, IA 52722 • (563) 332-5585
Jim Tully, Pastor

Kentucky

NEW COVENANT CHURCH

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(270) 575-3400 • Mike Rothwell, Pastor
E-mail: rothwell@nccpad.org www.ncc-
pad.org

NEW LIFE CHURCH

3402 Goose Creek Rd., • Louisville, KY,
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E-mail: timparish@newlifechurch-lou.org
www.newlifechurch-lou.org

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Jim Newsom, Executive Director
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Daniel Siedlecki, Pastor
E-mail: cmcc@sensible-net.com

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48917 • (517) 323-8180 • Pastor Fred
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3302 Paint Creek Drive • Oakland
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Jim Bennethum, Pastor • E-mail:
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(517) 655-9131 Bill Michell, Pastor
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Mississippi

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Dwayne Higgason, Pastor
www.gracetemple.com

NEW COVENANT CHURCH

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9018 Big Bend Blvd. • St. Louis, MO
63119 • (314) 963-1278
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E-mail: pete@ctkchurch.net
www.ctkchurch.net

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(732) 870-2028 Tony Moss, Pastor
E-mail: Lbcoventant@comcast.net

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FARMINGDALE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

117/125 Main St. • Farmingdale, NY, 11735
(516) 293-1838
John Quince, Pastor
E-mail: jandj1960@juno.com
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6062 Petra Mill Road • Granite Falls, NC
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Ohio

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www.covfam.org

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CIRCLEVILLE CHRISTIAN

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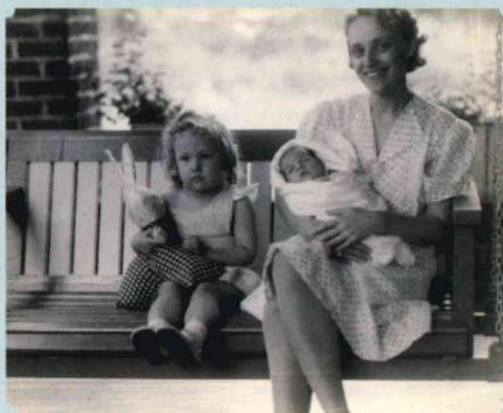
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*Carolyn was
a poet, a writer,
a musician,
a water-skier,
a traveler,
a voracious reader,
a teacher, an UNO
expert, a 24 fan, a
wonder in the
kitchen...she was the
picture of grace,
kindness, service,
beauty, and love.
Outside of her family,
she had a great love
and concern for the
younger women, to
see them nurtured
and trained in God's
ways. To calculate
the debt owed to her
by so many would
be impossible.*

Carolyn and daughter, Charlyn

AS MANY OF OUR READERS know, my mother, Carolyn Simpson, passed away back in February of this year after a lengthy battle with cancer. I believe that Mom won that battle, and she has now received her prize in the presence of the Lord.

I can never thank God enough for His blessings through Mom. While I appreciate reading in the Bible about the people who loved God and followed Jesus and taught



Carolyn, Eleanore Ann and Eleanore Dix

a Deacon for many decades before his death in 1991, and Grandma and Aunt Eleanore Ann are both still members of the First Baptist Church of Mobile.

Mom met Dad, in part, through church. As a young Baptist Pastor, my Dad was looking for a piano player for a series of revival meetings, and Mom answered the call. They were married in 1960, and three years later, a little bundle of joy followed who eventually grew

“to Life!”

a tribute to Carolyn Simpson

BY
STEPHEN
SIMPSON

us so much about walking in the Spirit, I was so privileged to have a living example of all of that in Mom. She exemplified all that it meant to be a godly woman, daughter, sister, wife, mother, and grandmother. She was not only our Mom, but she was a spiritual mother and model to many around the world.

BRIEF HISTORY

In 1940, Carolyn Francis Dix Simpson was born in Chattanooga,

Tennessee, to Albert and Eleanore Dix. Grandpa Dix was a much-lauded medical doctor and geologist, and Grandma Dix was a nurse. A younger sister, Eleanore Ann, was born three years later, and the family grew up in Mobile, Alabama. Mom learned very early what it meant to love and serve others from her own parents' selfless example and through caring for her sister, who had special needs. Grandpa and Grandma were faithful Baptists—Grandpa served as

into the author of this article. In 1969, my sister, Charlyn, was born, followed by the family Floridian, brother Jonathan in 1972.

OVERCOMING CANCER

When Mom was diagnosed with cancer in 2005, some of her doctors were not hopeful, and did not give her long to live. But, she kept her heart turned toward the Lord, and the last three years of her life proved

continued on page 15



How to **HANDLE** Your Next Available Dollar

WHETHER LOOKING FOR SPECIFIC investment recommendations, or biblically-based financial teaching and perspective, every month, thousands of Christians rely on the counsel of Sound Mind Investing (SMI). The SMI primary investing strategy has beaten the U.S. market the past nine years in a row. Its founder, Austin Pryor, was a regular guest on Larry Burkett's radio program. Other key Christian financial leaders like Ron Blue and Dave Ramsey have had kind things to say about SMI over the years as well.

Recently we were fortunate to catch up with Mark Biller, Executive Editor of SMI's financial newsletter (which has been publishing since 1990) to discuss investing and current events impacting our economy.



An Interview with Mark Biller

Executive Editor for
Sound Mind Investing

by JONATHAN SIMPSON



121: Recently we've seen multiple billion dollar bailouts within the credit market; most notably with America's largest bank, Citibank, and largest lender, Countrywide. What is driving this and what will it mean to the individual?

MB: The key to understanding the recent credit crunch is realizing that the credit markets have their own cyclical pattern. The last big credit crunch was in the early 1990s, following the Savings and Loan crisis. For several years following that, lenders were fairly reluctant to lend, as they'd recently been burned by bad loans. So they demanded strict terms and would only lend to those that had very good credit. Over time, the higher profit potential of making loans at higher interest rates, to those less well-qualified, persuaded lenders to start lending more money to those further down the credit scale. After that went on for awhile without any new crisis developing, the lenders kept going further and further down the credit ladder, until eventually it seemed like anyone with a pulse could get a loan. At that point, we'd reached the opposite end of the credit cycle.

That's where we've been the past few years. All the exotic loan types that have been in the press in recent years—the interest only loans, the “2/28” adjustable rate mortgages, and so on—these were largely created to allow people to borrow money who really weren't very good credit risks. Lenders made these loans because of the high profits these loans earn, assuming the payments are actually made. This time

around, lenders also felt safer making the loans because the latest crop of financial wizards had supposedly come up with a way to eliminate much of the risk from this subprime mortgage group. Turns out that wasn't really the case, and they've since rediscovered the principle that lending money to people who are not likely to repay is still risky after all.

While the credit cycle often takes years to **loosen**, it can snap back and **tighten** in a hurry. That's what we've experienced over the past year. Unfortunately, when that occurs, it makes it more difficult for everyone to get loans of any type, as the lenders all get very nervous very quickly. This sudden tightening of the credit markets makes it harder for businesses as well as individuals to get financing, so there's a ripple effect throughout the whole economy.

On the individual consumer level, there's a large group of people with loans that aren't conventional fixed-rate mortgages. These mortgages are largely adjustable-rate, and are resetting at higher interest rates now that the initial "teaser" rate periods are ending. Many of these borrowers never expected to make payments at these higher rates; they expected to refinance into another low-rate loan when the time came for their teaser rate to reset. But now they've found the credit market has completely changed, and the same lenders that were happy to give them their mortgage 2-3 years ago won't touch them now.

With housing prices having peaked and in some cases fallen, these borrowers are between a rock and hard place: they can't afford their new higher mortgage payments, but they can't sell their homes for enough to cover the amount they owe on the mortgage. As a result, foreclosures have been rising rapidly in certain parts of the country, which just further exacerbates the problem as it adds more housing inventory to what is typically already a flooded marketplace.

With the economy slowing and lending still tight, the government is trying to push on both levers at its disposal to help. On the one hand, the Federal Reserve has cut interest rates by 1.25% since the beginning of the year, trying to stimulate lending and borrowing activity. On the other, the government is

pushing through an economic stimulus plan to try to help get the economy rolling again.

121: Under the proposed "economic stimulus plan," over 100 million American families receive a rebate check of \$300 per family member. Will this help? And what is the best use of this money for an individual?

MB: Unfortunately, the track record of these one-time "rebates" is quite poor in terms of their ability to stimulate the economy. Taking money from those who pay the most taxes and giving it as a "rebate" to those who pay less, or in some cases, no taxes at all, isn't a proven way to increase production and economic growth.

Thankfully, as individuals we can take actions to help insulate ourselves from these types of economic ups and downs. At SMI, we teach readers to set financial priorities according to a "4 Levels" process. These 4 levels are based on biblical principles and help readers understand what they should do with that "next available dollar."



LEVEL 1 IS GETTING DEBT-FREE

(Proverbs 22:7). The journey toward financial peace of mind begins by making it a priority to pay off those credit cards, car loans, student loans, and other short-term debts. Accelerating the payments on your mortgage should also be a goal—albeit a longer-term one.



LEVEL 2 IS SAVING FOR FUTURE NEEDS

(Proverbs 21:20). Even if you've not paid off all your consumer debt yet, it's a good idea to set aside some money for emergencies. That means establishing a contingency fund. We suggest trying to save \$1,000 as a short-term goal while you're working on Level 1. Eventually, an emergency fund of \$10,000 or so is probably suitable for most family situations. We know that sounds like a lot, and it's your call. But most financial planners agree it's prudent to have at least three to six months living expenses in reserve.



LEVEL 3 IS INVESTING YOUR SURPLUS

(Matthew 25:21). When you venture into the stock and bond markets, you take the risk of losing part of your money. That's why you shouldn't apply your discretionary money at Level 3 until you've paid all your consumer debts and established

a decent Level 2 emergency fund. Every dollar applied to Levels 1 and 2 is **guaranteed** to improve your financial situation. That's not always the case at Levels 3 and 4.



LEVEL 4 IS DIVERSIFYING FOR SAFETY

(Ecclesiastes 11:2). Once your Level 3 investments reach a certain size (SMI uses \$25,000 as a rough rule of thumb), it's time to transition to Level Four for further diversification. By adding holdings that "march to different drummers," we create a more efficient, less volatile portfolio.

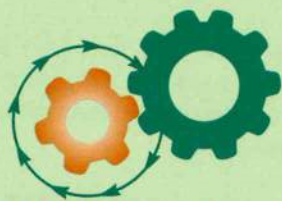
So, when evaluating what to do with any potential tax rebate money, you can see that our 4 Levels framework offers some pretty clear guidelines. It's not that these priorities are so unique or clever. It's that they're biblical, and they work. If you eliminate debt and build an emergency fund, you have a lot less to fear from periodic economic disturbances. That helps you obey other biblical commands about not worrying, being generous on every occasion, and so on.

121: Your Company states that one of its goals is to help individuals not only have more, but give more. What would you say to someone in generation "X" or "Y" who might believe they don't currently earn enough to invest, let alone give?

MB: Giving is a funny thing. It's easy to look at people who earn more than we do and think, "If I made as much money as they do, it'd be easy to tithe and give generously." And it's also easy to look at people who earn less than we do and think, "Well, if I only made that much, it wouldn't be a big deal to give 10% of it away." But it's always hard to look at the exact amount of money we've been entrusted with *today* and give generously from that amount.

The irony is that Christians have so many reasons to give generously! First of all, God tells us to do so. But beyond that, Scripture reveals that our giving makes God happy, that God has built a law of reciprocity into our world, that we store up treasures in heaven when we give on earth, and so on. If those positive reasons aren't motivation enough, there are warnings like Luke 12:21 to motivate us that things won't end well for the one "who store up things for himself but is not rich towards God."

I'm 35 years old, and I know from relatively



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recent experience what it's like to support a wife and children on a single, modest income. At the end of the day, I think giving is a trust issue. Do you really believe that God will take care of your needs if you're faithful to give what He's asked of you? Our money often acts as a mirror, reflecting what is most valuable to us. If you look at someone's checkbook and credit card statement, it won't take long to figure out what their true priorities are.

That said, I'm also sympathetic to the financial strains many people face. My advice to the person who honestly wants to give more, but doesn't feel that they are able is simply this: test God. That's not boldness on my part, it's Malachi 3:10, where God challenges Israel to bring its tithe to the Lord and see if He isn't faithful to meet their needs. Start giving beyond your comfort level and see if God doesn't meet you there and start providing for your needs. And as He does, you be faithful in return and continue to stretch your giving higher.

Here's one final thought on giving at a level beyond what you think is possible. I encourage every reader who sees this to take some time to *prayerfully* consider a future giving schedule. This is an idea I saw in a great little book called **The Eternity Portfolio**. If your family income is currently \$50,000 and you're giving 10%, then your giving schedule might call for you to give 10% of all your income up to \$60,000, then 15% of any income between \$60,000-\$80,000, 20% of your income between \$80,000-\$100,000, and so on. **(Note that I'm not trying to suggest any particular percentages or income levels with this example, that's between you and God.)** Don't be bashful! Continue that schedule out to income levels that you don't really expect to ever hit.

A couple things happen when you create a future giving schedule like that. One, it firmly establishes your intention to be generous and takes you out of a default giving posture. By establishing future levels of generosity that are in excess of your current level, it enlarges your vision about giving. Second, it commits you to giving increasing portions of any future increase to the Lord. As you reach those future income levels (which often occurs quicker than people expect as the Lord blesses their efforts to give more

generously at their current level), your giving increase is already predetermined, so it gets taken care of *first*, before you adjust all your other spending to the higher income.

Instead of adjusting all your other spending first and continuing to simply give the same percentage of your new, higher income, the future giving schedule allows you to painlessly bump your giving up significantly over time, to levels that many Christians never even dream of. It's a fantastic tool, and I've heard some amazing stories of what God has done from people who have used it.

Note that the future giving schedule doesn't let you off the hook on your current giving though. The key to starting down the path to generous *future* giving is to begin to stretch a little bit with your *current* giving. Then watch as the Lord accelerates your ability to be generous in the future. Our giving doesn't obligate God to bless us financially. We're not manipulating Him to give us more. We're simply saying "God, I desire to give more generously than I am now. Help me to be able to be generous on every occasion. Help me to be faithful to increase my giving and to hold everything you entrust to me with an open hand." I think that's an irresistible prayer to God when it comes from a sincere heart.

SMI is a non-denominational financial newsletter that has been in continuous monthly publication since 1990. SMI exists to help individuals understand and apply Biblically-based principles for making spending and investing decisions in order that: (1) their future financial security would be strengthened, and (2) their giving to worldwide missionary efforts for the cause of Christ would accelerate. In other words, they want to help people have more so they can give more. For more information please visit www.soundmindinvesting.com. 121



Jonathan Simpson is Director of the Construction Services Team for Apex III, a construction firm based in Mobile, AL. He also coordinates *Marketplace Exchange* for CSM and provides management assistance for the Hidden Treasures Costa Rica ministry.

to be quite blessed and momentous.

By early 2007, Mom had become very ill and weak, but through prayer, treatment, nutrition, and determination, she grew strong enough to travel to Gatlinburg for our annual CSM conference to see



her friends and to spend time with Dad in the area where they had honeymooned back in

1960. It was one of those special, golden times...Mom laughed, talked, walked, and took it all in. I will never forget her standing up, hands raised, singing, "Blessed Be the Name of the Lord," during one of our times of worship. She told me often how much that song meant to her.

Days later, she lay in the hospital, facing emergency surgery for a life-threatening tumor-related blockage...the surgeon was unsure if she would make it through the surgery. Not only did she make it, but she was alert and talkative in the recovery room; her main concern then was ministering to and encouraging our family. How typical of Mom, who lived her whole life to serve the Lord and her family...and how well she did it.

Despite a grim prognosis, she recovered swiftly and within a month, she was at the beach with us for a brief family vacation. My daughter Gracie later said of Mom's constant demeanor, "Granna was Springtime and sunshine." And that's how she was on that vacation. At one point, she was determined ... despite the cancer, two hip replacements, and a pacemaker ... to take a short boat ride with our family. She bravely and happily climbed into the boat, and it was a beautiful evening.

Mom lived to see my sister have her new baby, Madison Genoa, and

she was determined to travel to Costa Rica, where Charlyn, Enrique, and their family serve through the Hidden Treasures ministry. Again, Mom undertook a very difficult trip in order to be with that new grandbaby, because nothing brought joy to Mom quite like being with family.

THE HOME STRETCH

I read some years ago that the home stretch of a race is no time for lagging, but it's when we give it our all and finish well. That's how it was for Mom. She had battled through so much, but there was one more victory in life yet to be won. Even as she faced another difficult hospital stay, a miraculous door was opening for my brother and sister-in-law to adopt a newborn baby, and so it was in early December that little Elizabeth Charlyn Simpson was born. Mom was able to see and hold her newest grandchild.

Mom was now in a life-or-death battle, unable to eat, and it seemed that she may not ever again come home from the hospital. But God worked a Christmas miracle. Shortly after Dad snuck some sherbet up to Mom's room from the cafeteria, Mom was able to eat and keep her food down, and three days before Christmas, she was strong enough to come home one more time. There, surrounded by her husband, her Mom, her sister, all of her children, her two daughters-in-law, her son-in-law, and all nine grandchildren, Mom celebrated the birth of the Savior and rejoiced in the fruit of her life. Her children called her blessed.

It was just one day shy of exactly 50 years since their first date that Mom bade farewell to Dad, and to those of us around her bedside as she breathed her last and stepped into eternity. Just hours before, she had told my daughter, "I'm in the hands of Jesus now."

She was a poet, a writer, a musician, a water-skier, a traveler, a voracious reader, a teacher, an UNO expert, a 24 fan, a wonder in the kitchen ... she was the picture of grace, kindness, service, beauty, and love. Outside of her family, she had a great love and concern for the younger women, to see them nurtured and trained in God's ways. To calculate the debt owed to her by so many would be impossible.

Mom was fond of the Hebrew phrase, "L'Chaim," which means, "to life!" She was full of life, and she gave life every place that her life touched. In so doing, she became a model for wives and moms worldwide, and her legacy continues to grow. 121

Stephen Simpson is the Editor of *One-to-One* and Senior Pastor of Covenant Church of Mobile.

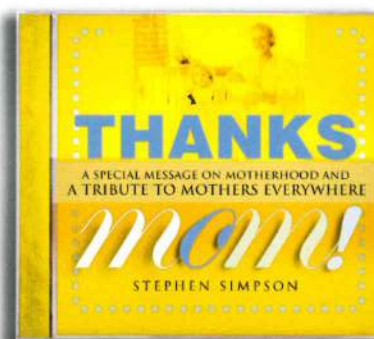
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