

Saturday, February 20
Readings: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8;
John 12:27-36

4

Give willingly

as moved by the Holy Spirit. We have been prepared to give ourselves. We give our time, talents, and resources freely.

“For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave ...”
2 Corinthians 8:3

Prayer: *Almighty God, all that we possess is from your loving hand. Give us grace that we may honor you with all we own, always remembering the account we must one day give to Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*⁸

Focal Verse: “For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven.” Ecclesiastes 3:1

Reflection: We had dinner with some friends when their 8 year old son announced at the dinner table that he needed a cell phone. Why does an 8 year old need a cell phone?

Then I remembered from all the back-to-school advertisements that the new back packs for school-age kiddos have a pocket especially designed for cell phones. And this is the conundrum that many parents face. Advertisers tell our children what’s in...what they need...what will make them feel good and what will make them be a part of the “in” crowd. And having a cell phone to fit in the special pocket of the backpack is definitely a “need” when you are 8 years old.

Nathan Dungan, author of *Prodigal Sons and Material Girls: How Not to be Your Child’s ATM* and founder of *Share, Save, Spend*, addresses the “time-guilt-stuff” conundrum that most parents face. Parents spend money and buy more stuff because of the decreased amount of time they spend with their children.

Teaching and modeling generosity, including children in giving opportunities both at church and at home, teaching media literacy, and parenting generous young people in a “hyper-consumer” culture, are only a few ways to begin. Some may choose the political route and attempt to tackle the challenges by changing the media and advertising strategies, but I propose that we begin to address the challenges of parenting children in a hyper-consumer culture by beginning to teach and nurture healthy financial habits that include teaching generosity through first sharing, saving, and spending.⁹

What do you hear?
How does it make you feel?
Toward what are you being drawn?
What do you sense you should do?

⁸ LBW, p. 44.

⁹ Kennedy, Erica , Stewardship Now, December, 2009