

Passing the Buck

Have you ever thought about how God has quite literally passed the buck to us? He creates everything, hands it over to us, and then expects us to not only take care of ourselves, but everyone else, too. What's up with that?

It just doesn't make sense. Why do we send money and people to Malawi in an effort to make some small improvement in their lives when God could eliminate their poverty simply by arching His left eyebrow just ever so slightly? We send money and people to build homes in Mexico when God could raise His right pinky just the barest bit and give them all 4 beds/3 baths with two car attached garages.

We give money, time and even share our homes with hurricane evacuees when God could wiggle His toe (just the teeniest wiggle) and rebuild it all bigger and better than ever, and 20 feet higher, to boot. Then there's IHN, Guatemala, the bread runs, freeze nights, the Endowment Fund, disaster relief and so many other programs where we reach out to others. Why do we do all of that when God could do it so much faster and better? Why has God passed the buck to us??

And even the idea that we're bringing the Word of God to others, witnessing through our actions, doesn't quite cut it. There's nothing I could do for, or say to, anyone that would be a quadzillionth as effective as a few simple words from a burning bush.

So why has God placed this great burden on us? Why doesn't He just take care of things Himself?

Could it be because it's really a *gift* and *not* a burden? The gift of the refiner's fire? The opportunity to test ourselves and grow our faith, to prove to ourselves that what we *think* is in our hearts is really there, to actually walk the walk and not just talk the talk?

Maybe you're like me when it comes to deciding how much to give to the church. Do you look at your finances, your time, your

skills and talents, and decide how much you can "afford" to give - in essence giving only what is *left over* after you've used what you want for other things?

God created everything in the heavens and on Earth and gave it to us. Or rather He *entrusted* it to us. And there's the rub - we are *stewards*, not owners. And that's also where I start having a really hard time. If I'm an owner, I only have to answer to myself. But if I'm a *steward* and it all really belongs to someone else...

My wife and I are retired. We have to make our money last for what...30?...maybe 40 years? And we've still got two daughters to get through school and out on their own. Then there's the worry about what medical expenses might be like down the road, the cost of assisted living or nursing home care should one or both of us need it, the cost of...

So now when the church needs an extra commitment to be able to continue to do God's work, what do we do? The more we give, the greater the risk we take. **And yet, if we believe in God, we also have to believe that there is no real risk because He will somehow take care of us when we need it.** It's just that, well, how do we know we'll like the way He chooses to take care of us?

Oh, how I wish my faith were stronger. But maybe this is an opportunity to make it stronger, to get closer to God. Who knows what lies on the other side of the door that now stands before me? My Heavenly Father, what should I do with the buck You have passed to me?

I wish I had been born a dog. They don't have to worry about any of this, and I've heard they *all* go to heaven.

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