

More Blessed to Give than to Receive

A Model of Lifetime Giving

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Gain all you can, save
all you can, give all
you can.

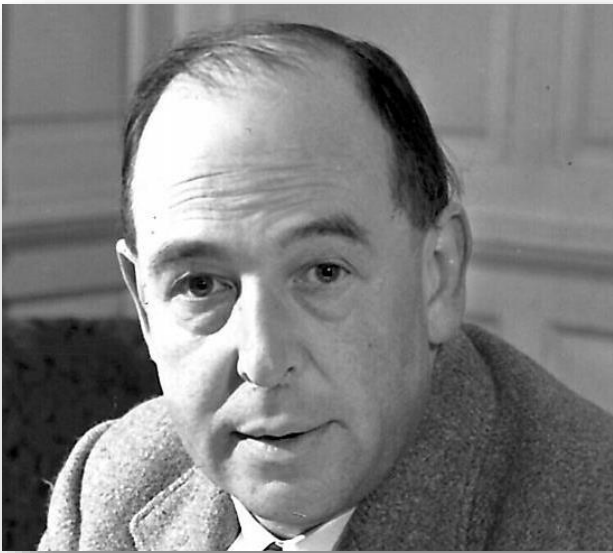
”

John Wesley

Introduction

- ▶ Christian giving
 - ▶ Counter-cultural
 - ▶ Requires discipline (like investing)

C. S. Lewis



- ▶ “I do not believe one can settle how much we ought to give. I am afraid the only safe rule is to give more than we can spare. There ought to be things we should like to do and cannot do because our charitable expenditure excludes them.”

Pope Francis



- ▶ “It is striking that even some who clearly have solid doctrinal and spiritual convictions frequently fall into a lifestyle which leads to an attachment to financial security, or to a desire for power or human glory at all cost, rather than giving their lives to others in mission. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of missionary enthusiasm!”

Purpose

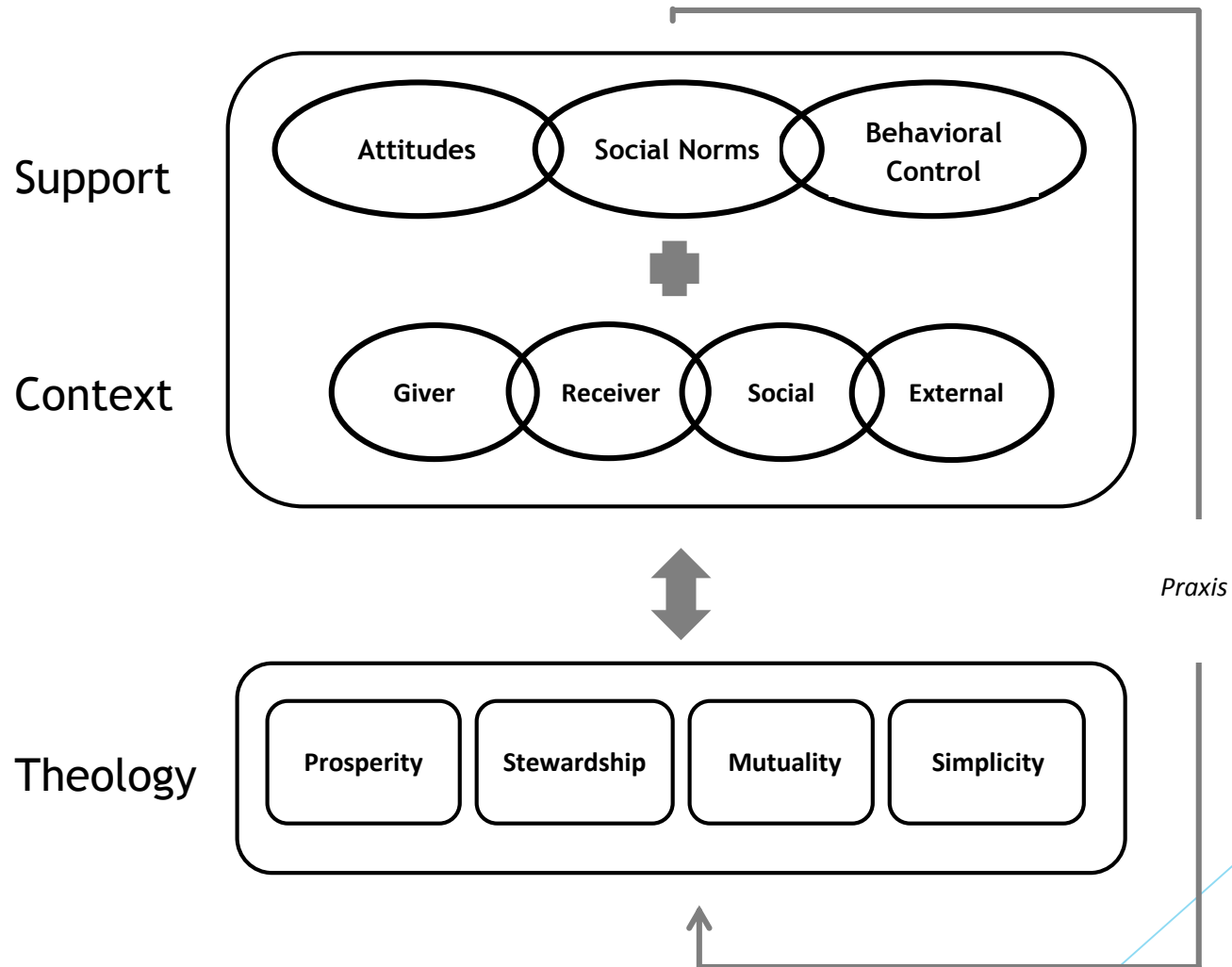
- ▶ Better understand giving behavior, bringing theological and social science perspectives into a model which aids in practicing lifetime giving

Do Christians Give?

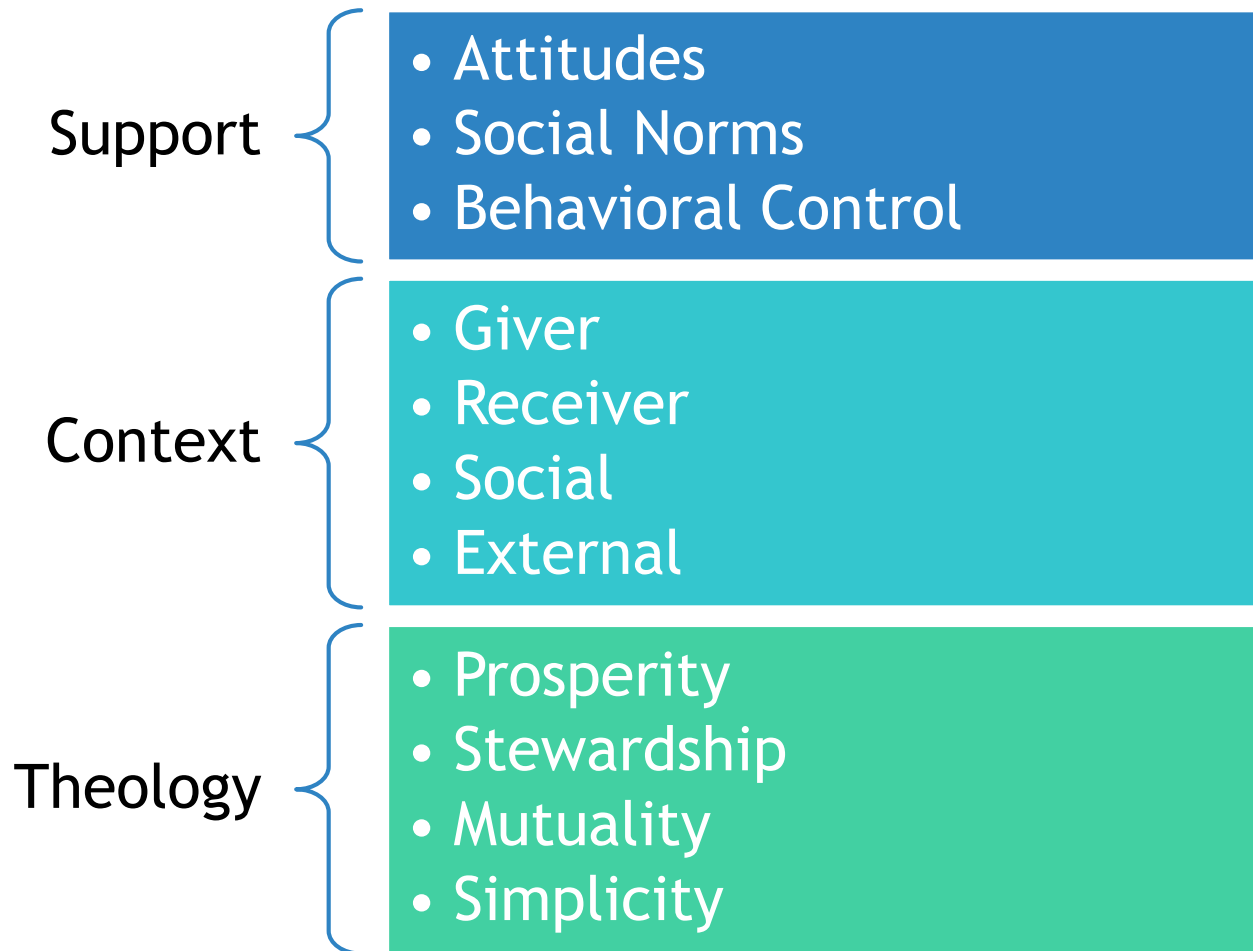
- ▶ The religious give
 - ▶ US Religious: 65%
 - ▶ US Non-religious: 56%
- ▶ But not as much as assumed
 - ▶ 2.21% of gross income

belief-behavior gap?

Giving Influences



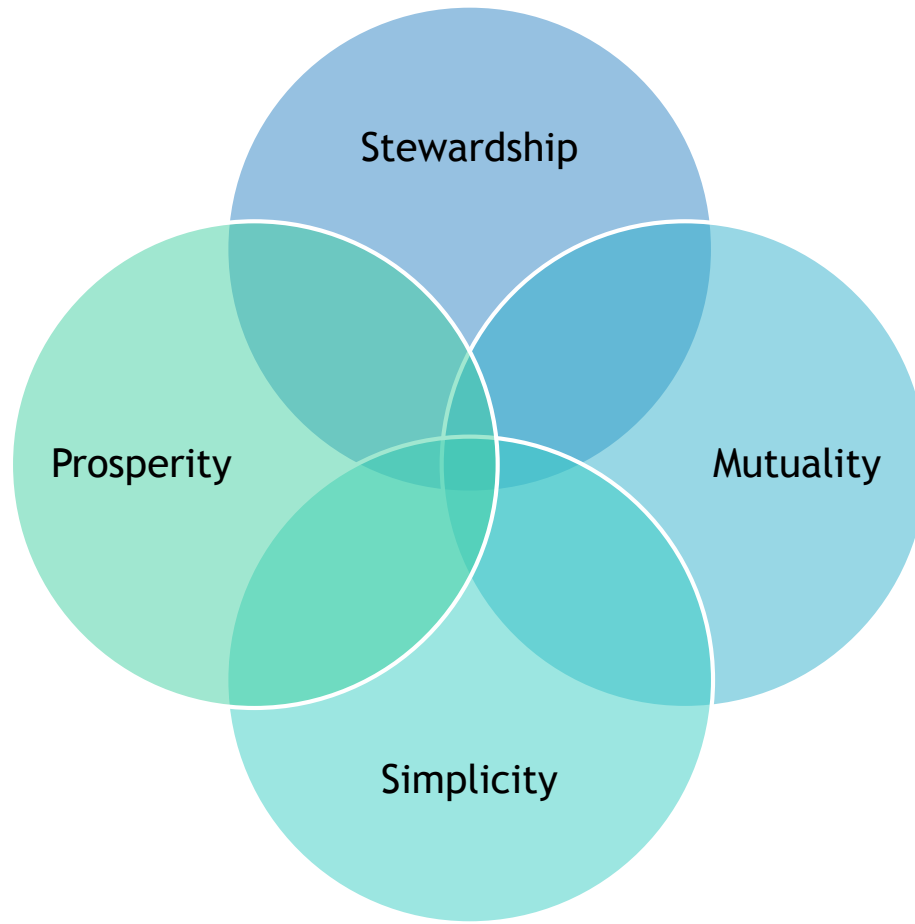
Giving Influences



Biblical Teachings

- ▶ Investing with God
- ▶ Sacrificial and generous
- ▶ Intentional, cheerful, and voluntary
- ▶ Proportional, according to ability, and personally determined
- ▶ In response to need
- ▶ Met with God's blessing

Theologies of Giving



Theology

▶ Prosperity

▶ *God wants to shower believers with material and other blessings; one merely needs to demonstrate faith, such as by giving in faith*

▶ Concerns

- ▶ Giving should not be predicated on the expectation of unrealized materiality
- ▶ Others and especially the needy should be included in the purposing of wealth
- ▶ Wealth and poverty have implications for discipleship

Theology

▶ Stewardship

- ▶ *All creation is God's; Christians have a fiduciary responsibility to steward*
- ▶ Distortions
 - ▶ Preservation and risk-avoidance
 - ▶ Dominion
 - ▶ Piety

“Contemporary Christian discourse about stewardship does not emphasize charity, and often creates an implicit justification for preserving the goods entrusted to one by the Master. Quite to the contrary...Luke always refers to stewards in their capacities as *giving away* the goods of the Master.”

~ Richard Hays, *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*

Theology

▶ Mutuality

▶ *Christian giving mutually transforms giver and receiver, eliminating or reversing perceived hierarchy*

▶ Expressions

- ▶ Learning from the other (e.g., employed-homeless)
- ▶ The poor redeem the wealthy
- ▶ Paying forward

Theology

▶ Simplicity

- ▶ *Sparing material goods so one can live out the renunciation of wealth taught by Jesus and share in the joys of relationship and service*
- ▶ Expressions
 - ▶ Simple living
 - ▶ Intentional mission and intentional community

Comparisons

- ▶ Prosperity and simplicity necessitate radical giving; stewardship and mutuality, a range
- ▶ Prosperity and simplicity promise transformation and abundance, one by escaping material poverty and one by entering into it
- ▶ Stewardship emphasizes the impact of the *gift* whereas mutuality emphasizes the impact of *giving*
- ▶ Prosperity is often silent on the gift's impact on others; mutuality places this center-stage
- ▶ Presenting four views rather than advocating a single approach allows each voice to be heard and invites theological reflection from scripture, tradition, and community

Context

▶ Economic insights

Pure Altruist

- Recipient's welfare

Pure Egoist

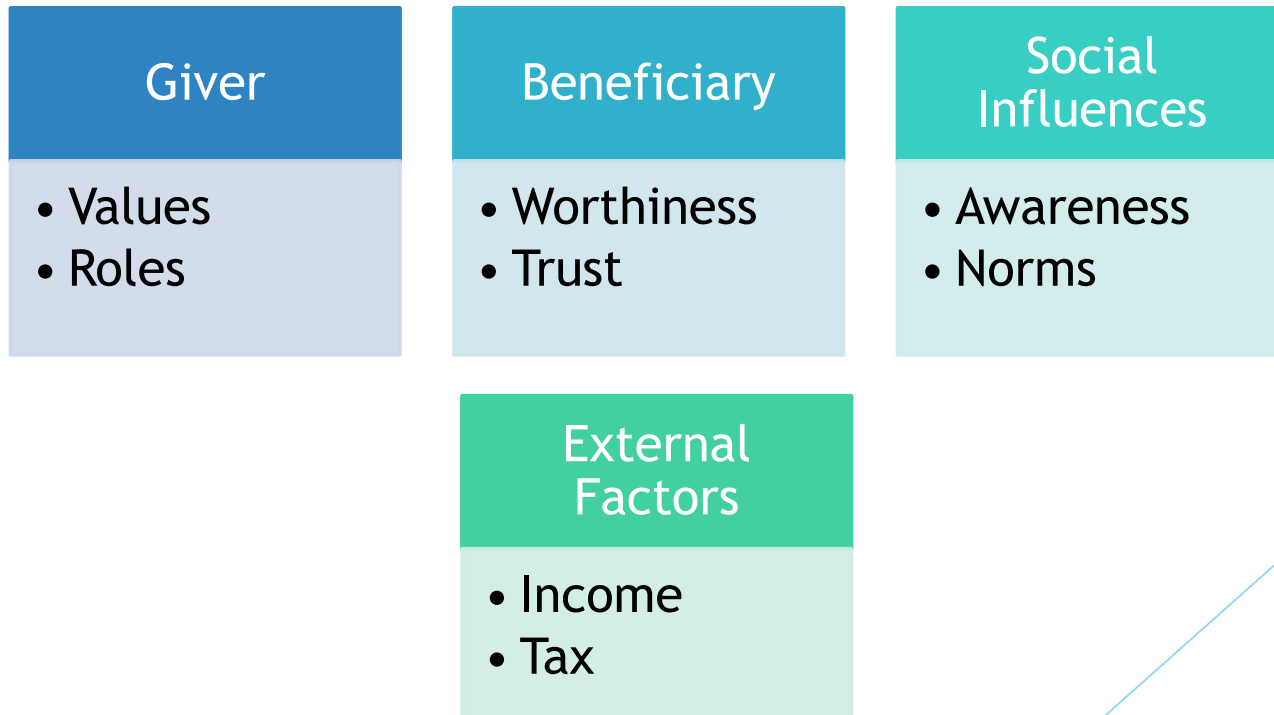
- Warm glow

Impact Philanthropy

- Make a difference

Context

► Social and psychological insights



Context

▶ Tithing

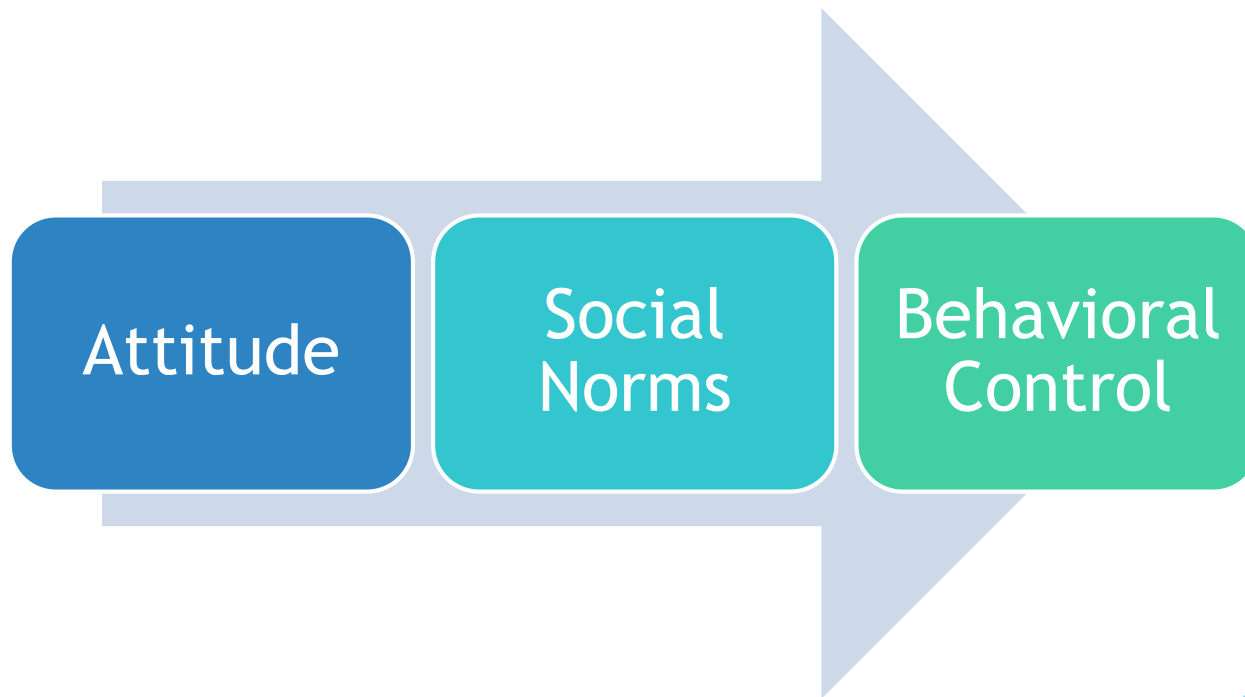
- ▶ Most scholars conclude that while sacrificial giving is expected of Christians, tithing is not

▶ Formation

- ▶ An individual's purpose in life, values and perceived role, the perception of recipients, encouragement and awareness within the body of Christ, and the valuation of gifts pass iteratively through communion, reflection, and praxis with God

Supports

- ▶ Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)



Support

▶ Attitude

- ▶ Positive attitude
- ▶ Awareness of need
- ▶ Making a difference
- ▶ Obstacles in trust, attribution, security

Support

▶ Social Norms

- ▶ Congregations - awareness, expectation, and modeling
- ▶ Retreats (e.g., Generous Giving)
- ▶ Giving circles - in person or virtual
- ▶ Incarnational mission
- ▶ Intentional Christian community
- ▶ Religious community associates (e.g., secular Franciscan)

Support

- ▶ Behavioral Control
 - ▶ Evaluate spending and track giving
 - ▶ Time with upstream and downstream changes
 - ▶ Automate allocations
 - ▶ Progressive giving
 - ▶ God's account
 - ▶ Liturgical calendar
 - ▶ Impact giving
 - ▶ Traditional vehicles (e.g., trust, donor-advised funds, etc.)

Conclusion

- ▶ Business students need to learn about giving just as they do saving, investing, debt, and spending
- ▶ Giving is a distinctive and necessary topic for faith-based business schools
- ▶ We hope this work stimulates additional research and thought

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Thank You

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Jozell Brister

Request the full paper at: jozell.brister@acu.edu