

RECOVERING THE LOST OFFERING

- OF COVID19 -

by
Mark Brooks
The Stewardship Coach



Recovering The Lost Offering of COVID19

By

Mark Brooks

The Stewardship Coach

@StewardshipMan

Table of Contents

Introduction

Setting the Course for Recovering *Your* Lost Offerings of COVID19 Page 3

The Right Target for Your Message Page 4

Part One: Laying the Foundation for the Appeal

The Right Message Page 5

The Right Tools Page 6

The Right Plan of Action Page 7

Part Two: Your Tool Box for Implementing Your Plan

Setting the Course for Recovering *Your* Lost Offerings of COVID19

How is giving at your church? That is the question I always ask church leaders. My guess is if you are reading this that your giving has seen better days. You are not alone.

10% to 20% decline in giving has been my projection of the range of giving declines that most churches will see from the lockdown of COVID19. Some are seeing more than that, while others report an increase in giving. I rejoice for them, but my focus is on you and your church. My life goal is this,

To Reverse the Decline in Giving One Church at a Time, Starting With Your Church!

The goal of this manual is to help you **receive an amount equal to one week's offering** before COVID19 hit you.

That's what, *Recovering the Lost Offering of COVID19*, is designed for. My goal is to see you utilize the principle and plans of this manual to reverse your giving decline. I believe in the local church and its mission. So, let's work to fill up your offering plates, even if they are only digital offering plates. If you follow the simple ideas and plans here, I believe you can and will see a giving increase. This manual is designed to be implemented at the close of summer, giving you additional dollars for ministry and missions through your fall season.

Before we get started on the specifics, let me establish a key principle right off the bat. No matter how far behind in giving you are it is essential that you,

Don't panic. Panic leads to desperation. Desperation leads to poor decisions, and poor decisions lay the groundwork for future problems. Donors give to institutions with proven track records, not to ones they worry will implode. Your church is no different. This manual is designed to provide you with a plan of action that will negate any panic you feel. To that end, we will work to make the message of your plan be positive.

I am going to help you craft a plan around *your* unique mission and ministry. People give to that which matters. Non-profit fundraisers talk about making a case for the "ask." I am going to help you make a case for why you are asking your donors to give to your church.

Let's **connect the dots!** We want to show people the incredible things your church is doing to advance the Kingdom of God. By telling your story of life change, you show how a donor giving a dollar to your church impacts the world. That's what I mean by connecting the dots!

Before we do that, we need to spend some time preparing for the message you will communicate to help you recover your lost offerings.

The first part of this manual deals with the fundamental principles needed to help you recover any offering you might have lost. The last section not only gives you a step by step guide of how to accomplish this, but it also gives you tools that you can actually use. Let's get started recovering your lost offering of COVID19!

I am your Indiana Jones when it comes to revering the lost offering of COVID19!

The Right Target for Your Message

Here is a reality in every church in America. **On average, 15% of your donors give 50% of all that is given!** Even more shocking is that the average church sees as much as 90% of their giving coming from 20% to 25% of their donors! My team has analyzed more giving than any other stewardship firm in America. Our analysis has confirmed what we have always known; the few always give the majority of what is given.

For your come from behind strategy to work, you must take your message to this crucial group. This group has the spiritual maturity to hear your message, and they typically are the ones in a financial position to give more. If you are going to be successful with this campaign, you must have the right target. As my old boss, John Maxwell says, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” Your leaders are the key to your come from behind giving strategy. I always start my giving initiatives by focusing on **Leaders First.**

Don’t take this key segment for granted! Let me share two important points. First, your leaders, especially your giving leaders, will always be the most responsive to requests for additional funds. It is essential to take your message to the right target group if you are to have success. Yet, you never want to take them for granted, assuming they will always float the boat for you. The second important point is that your top donors will appreciate a giving campaign that includes *everyone* doing their part.

I always advise that you get your leaders on board early by informing them ahead of time about the special come from behind offering you will be launching. **My tool section will show you how to do this.**

A subset goal of this come from behind offering is to motivate new donors to give to support your vision. Stressing this will help your current giving leaders know that you are not taking them for granted and that your plan will encourage others to do their part.

Every year you lose donors either from death, transfer, or other reasons. We call this The Churn Rate. Like attendance, your church has a front door and a back door. Since you are losing donors yearly out the back door, you must continue to replace them with donors coming in the front door. Special offerings allow you to attract new donors as a result of your compelling vision and message.

While our primary objective is to help replace at least one lost offering, your strategy can and will help you accomplish much more. If all we accomplish is raising one week’s offering, then you might very well be right back in the same place in a few months. However, if you have a strategy that attracts new donors, your path to financial stability is much brighter.

The reality is, however, that your leaders, both giving and ministry leaders, will comprise the bulk of what you receive in this special offering. This is why I advise you get your leaders on board early in the process. I have found that when you treat leaders like leaders, they act like leaders!

With this in mind, let’s get started recovering your lost offerings!

Part One: Laying the Foundation for the Appeal

How do you recover a lost offering? For one thing, you can't merely sit around wringing your hands about the decline in giving. You must act. The longer you wait to act, the deeper the hole you will find yourself in. Any chance of closing out the year strong will become more difficult. Using my manual will give you a strategy for recovering lost giving.

If you have ever built a house or a new facility at your church, you know how important the foundation is. The same is true when it comes to a plan for making up a lost offering. So let's start by laying the right foundation, and it begins with crafting the message of your appeal.

The Right Message

Your first step is to craft a message that matters. Dollars follow a vision. Your vision is what drives people to give you more money. Thus, every appeal needs a driver for the vision to penetrate and capture the hearts and, ultimately, the wallet of your donors. The more compelling the driver, the more likely you are to get a response.

Every "ask" needs a driver. What's a driver? The driver is the message or story you are communicating about *why* people should give to your appeal. There is no better driver to achieve generosity than a vision *if* it is communicated effectively.

What is vision? My friend Herb Buwalda came up with what I think is the best definition. He says, "Mission," answers the question, "Why are you here?" "Vision," answers the question, "Where are you going; What is God asking of you now to impact the mission?"

Let's make a case for your vision! When I work with a client for a significant giving initiative, I start by asking the pastor to write out the vision behind whatever we are raising money for. Technically this is called a Vision Case Statement. On one page front and back, I want a broad overview of what we are raising money for. I advise you to do the same thing for recovering any lost offerings of COVID19.

The 3 C's of Vision Casting – Your vision must contain these three C's to be heard. Your vision must be,

1. **Clear** – Remember, Keep It Simple Somehow!
2. **Concise** – Can people repeat back in two to three sentences what you are asking them to give to? If not, then you need to work on the "ask."
3. **Compelling** – Does it touch their heart? If not, then the response will be less than you hope for.

Your message is your vision, and the better you craft that message, the more money you will raise. Take time to think through how to best craft a message for the vision driving this appeal to recover the lost offering of COVID19

Check out my tool section for a worksheet designed to help you craft your vision and message.

The Right Tools

Your vision is the driver, but the best driver in the world is worthless without **effective vehicles to drive the vision to those you want to impact**. In this section, I am going to share with you the essential tools you need in place to launch your come from behind, giving strategy effectively.

Back before COVID19, we had a captured audience every weekend. Some who are reading this have re-opened. You can thus use your campus and platform to communicate the message of your plan to recover your lost offering. Even when we can meet on-campus, the best strategy is a 24/7 approach to the offering. In the 21st century, we must use multiple tools to achieve giving success.

What systems should you have in place?

1. **Dynamic website.** Your website is the first place most people will visit BEFORE they ever darken your doors. Make yours a good one!
2. **Robust online giving platform, including text giving.** You should be working towards the majority of your giving coming in some type of digital means. I partner with what I feel is the best online provider, <https://gyve.com/>
3. **Social Media platform and presence.** Like it or not, social media is where many people spend a great bulk of their time. If you are not there, you are missing an opportunity to connect with your people and those in your community.
4. **Postage paid envelopes.** I know this sounds old school, but this can be a great tool if used properly.
5. **Extensive database of your donors.** A given is to have all your member's email addresses. Yet you need also to have the ability to break this list down by various subgroups like first-time givers, by consistency, etc.
6. **A mass email platform, such as Constant Contact or MailChimp.** There are many platforms to help you send out emails in multiple batches. Some offer free services for a limited number of sends. Most cost only a few dollars a month. Find the tool that suits your church database best.
7. **Offering talks.** On-campus or live streaming, it is essential that each offering time has a talk connecting your vision to giving. I'll share more on this later.

These are the essential tools for implementing the plan I suggest. Having these tools in place will not only help you with your plan to recover a lost offering, but it will also help throughout the year.

Remember the old saying, don't put all your eggs in one basket? When it comes to a 21st-century communication plan, you must use all the tools in your toolbox to get your message out. In the next section of this manual, I will give you practical steps on how to utilize the tools above to communicate the vision of your message.

The Right Plan of Action

What is your plan? The best message and tools, while essential, are worthless without a plan of action. Let me lay out my overall strategy when it comes to plans for special offerings. The following plan of action uses Labor Day weekend as the target giving date. However, the principles here can be adapted to fit any timeframe.

Understanding the Uniqueness of a Special Offering

Let's start by breaking out the difference from a large offering like a capital campaign and a special offering. Smaller offerings or needs take a somewhat different approach. Your giving goal is much different for a special offering, and they do not require as much time and planning as do larger appeals. However, please note that special offerings *do* require time and attention. You can't download this manual on Saturday at 10 PM and find it useful!

Special offering strategy - Here is an overview of a plan of action for special offering:

- At least one month out craft the vision.
- Communicate three weeks out with your leadership. Why? Their gifts will drive the success of your offering! I'll show you how in the tool section of this manual.
- Two weeks from the offering, start showing the ministry impact of the area of need across all your communication platforms. Show your story!
- One week out, start a more direct appeal through social media. Set it up through your online giving platform. With a 24/7 offering strategy, you can begin the offering any time, not merely on the weekends.
- Two Sundays from the offering begin announcing from the platform the special offering for Labor Day.
- Send a series of direct mail appeals the week before the special offering and continue through the day after the special offering. Again, I will show how to do this in the tool section of this manual.
- Take up the offering with boldness! In two minutes or less, craft an offering talk that gives a positive take on the need your offering will meet. The tool section will provide you with a pre-written offering talk for this.
- Thank those that gave to the special offering and provide an update on the offering's results and its impact. Thanking your donors paves the way for the next "ask."

The tool section of this manual contains samples for your review.

Need more help thanking your donors? **Check out my manual, "First Time, Next Time, All the Time: A Plan for 1st Time Donors,"** at <https://acts17generosity.com/shop/>

Part Two: Your Tool Box for Implementing Your Plan

This section of the manual includes all the tools you will need to implement your own come from behind strategy, helping you recover your lost offerings! This list price for the full manual is \$9.95.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR GYVE CLIENTS!!!!

The Stewardship Coach and Gyve have partnered up to provide you a 50% price reduction for the full copy of *Recovering the Lost Offering of COVID19*.

To download your copy for only \$4.98 go to, <https://acts17generosity.com/shop/>

Under the cover, click on the button that says, Add to Cart. Then at the checkout look for the box that says, Discount Code. In the field marked Apply coupon type in GYVE to receive your 50% discount!