

The Principle of Maximums: Living With Enough to Give Away More

Book Review

KENT T. SAUNDERS
Anderson University

ABSTRACT: Roger Stichter has composed an important book that can change the way you live. *The Principle of Maximums* flips the idea of non-satiation and materialism on its head. Through the creation of maximums (maximum size of house, maximum type of car, maximum amount of money spent eating out, etc.), the reader is inspired to move their focus from what they can do for themselves toward what they can do for others. The book is important reading for faculty, students, and administrators.

INTRODUCTION

On the inside cover of Roger Stichter's book *The Principle of Maximums*, there are several endorsements. Keith Yoder notes that this book helps the reader move from "hoarding to generosity; from self-oriented to other-oriented." Stanley Green writes that Stichter "repudiates the idolatry of self-sufficiency." Bill Katip writes that Stichter has a "focus on eternity and not on things of this world." Caleb Roth believes that readers will be "challenged to contribute to the Kingdom instead of attempting to keep up with the Joneses." I agree with all of these comments and write this review to bring this book to your attention and hopefully inspire its use as a supplementary reading in your courses. For a brief overview from the author himself, the book trailer is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqLLqan88HI>.

CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

The book can be read quickly (143 pages); however, to give the concepts and applications time to sink in, I would recommend reading one chapter at a time and thinking through the "Think and Discuss" questions and "Living it Out" suggestions that accompany the end of each chapter. Examples of the concepts, applications, questions, and sug-

gestions that hit home with me are listed below to provide an overview.

Introduction

"Did you know what your parents believed about generosity? Did your family ever talk about being generous?" (p. 5). As an extension, do you plan to plan to talk with your family about generosity?

Chapter 1: Biblical Concepts of Money

In thinking about Mark 10:23, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God," Stichter writes that unless "we are willing to release our desire to be dependent upon ourselves and become dependent upon God, we cannot enter the Kingdom" (p. 9). Additionally, Stichter reminds us that Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 6:6 "godliness with contentment is great gain."

Chapter 3: Living by the Principle of Maximums

Paul wrote of learning to be content in Philippians 4:11-12. Stichter notes that for "most of us, desire is the real issue." When we can "control our desire, we have enough" (p. 26).

Chapter 7: Vehicles and Transportation

Stichter notes that we have been entrusted with stewardship responsibilities over some of God's assets. Even though

God allows us to make decisions with his money, it does not mean that “God approves of everything” we do “with his money” (p. 61). “What type of vehicle do you dream of owning? Will that vehicle bring you reward in heaven? Is owning it good stewardship of God’s money?” (p. 66).

Chapter 8: Possessions We Buy

We do not need to own everything we may possibly need for every possible situation. Stichter advocates borrowing from one another and “borrowing from each other breeds community” (p. 70). In the “Living it Out” conclusion of the chapter, Stichter encourages us to approach our local “church leaders to see if they are willing to establish a loaning system for church members” (p. 74).

Chapter 9: Recreation and Entertainment

Stichter distinguishes between activities that are entertaining and activities that re-create. One of the “Think and Discuss” questions challenges the reader to identify what “type of activities re-create you?” (p. 82).

Chapter 10: Retirement and Investing

Stichter is concerned with the tradeoff between saving for one’s own retirement compared to investing in God’s economy. Stichter worries that we are “building bank accounts and investment accounts instead of building a heavenly credit” (p. 83).

Chapter 14: Making Maximums a Reality for Your Stage in Life

Stichter believes that generosity is an “attitude whether you are poor or rich,” and we will not suddenly become generous when we feel “like we have a lot of money” (p. 122). Further, Stichter recommends setting a specific goal for how much you would like to give over the course of your life.

Recommended Resources for Financial Wisdom

This is the final section of the book and it includes fifteen additional books for those inspired and seeking to learn more.

the book for each of the students in my fall semester classes as a Christmas gift.

REFERENCES

- Stichter, R. L. (2019). *The Principle of Maximums: Living With Enough to Give Away More*. Winona Lake, Indiana: BMH Books.

CONCLUSION

I found Roger Stichter’s book to be thought-provoking and inspirational. I plan to seriously think through how I am using God’s resources and pray that I will implement several of the ideas and applications suggested in the book. In my opinion, the ideas and plans for action outlined in Stichter’s book were so important that I bought a copy of