

## Giving Legacy a Voice

Every year the vast majority of Americans who die do so without having prepared a valid Last Will and Testament. For the past three decades the numbers hover between 70 and 80 percent.

These same statistics apply to people of faith. Christians who have faithfully stewarded God's resources throughout their life, tithed to their churches, given to the ministry, "take a pass" on this important opportunity. State and federal laws provide some significant incentives for the preparation of a Will.

Personal wishes can be confirmed – wishes that deal with child custody, property distribution and a legacy of values. In many cases, a carefully planned Will serves to actually minimize costs related to settling an estate.

So what prevents believers from participating in the largest potential act of financial stewardship in their life?

This brochure examines a few possible reasons, and shows how easily a valid Will can be created.

## For More Information...

I have reviewed your brochure and:

- I would like to speak with someone who can provide additional information.
- I would like to receive information on other charitable tax planning options.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please complete and return. All inquiries are treated with complete confidentiality.)*



901 Commerce Street, Suite 600

Nashville, TN 37203-3697

800-245-8183

[www.sbfn.org](http://www.sbfn.org)

Copyright © 2009 Crescendo Interactive, Inc. IN0309-175

# Will Your Will



## Be Known?

*Giving Voice to your  
Legacy of Faith*





# Four Reasons People Avoid Preparing A Will

## *A Will Is Expensive*

In many instances, a carefully prepared Will does have some attendant costs. This is especially true where complicated or larger estates are involved. However, a few hundred dollars (or the cost of one car payment) pale in comparison to the cost of having no Will at all. Without a Will an estate may face the maximum in applicable probate costs and taxes. In the event of any family disagreement over distribution, legal costs skyrocket. By the time settlement occurs, hundreds or even thousands of dollars might have been lost. In some cases, heirs can actually end up bearing the brunt of out-of-pocket costs. Having a Will could even save you and your family money.

## *I Don't Like Legal Documents*

Many people seem to have a built-in distrust for legal documents that tend to be long and use language we don't speak every day. A Will is easily understood, however, when compared to the legal intricacies that an estate without a Will may experience—particularly when guided by a qualified attorney who provides a “plain talk” summary of the contents of a Will to ensure your goals are met.

## *I Don't Own Enough Property To Merit A Will*

It is easy for many people to feel their estate is relatively small and does not warrant the time and expense of a Will.

After all, news headlines always highlight multi-million dollar estates. The truth is that every day many people die possessing much more than they realize. What may be a modest home today, a small investment portfolio, or just the beginning of a savings account can enjoy significant growth in value before death. Over 90% of your wealth is typically in non-cash assets and property—places we often overlook. Where no Will exists, the state will determine distribution.

## *I Am Too Busy For This*

Finally, it is completely possible that the single biggest reason people fail to prepare a Will falls into the “life just gets in the way” category. For some it is simply their busy, daily routine that prohibits them from considering a Will. For others, it is the reality that no one plans to die. For another group it may be rationalized under the “no one can know the future” reason, thinking that so much could change between today and the time of death. What good could it do to plan today?

## *Creating A Will*

While most reasons for procrastinating are understandable, none will serve to lessen the reality that the absence of a Will can have a devastating impact on an estate.

Here is a look at what constitutes a valid Will that can stand up under the Probate process:

- A Will must be signed by a person of legal age. In most states this is age 18.
- The document must be the product of a person with full capacity to state their Will.
- The document must have been created with full intent of taking effect at death.
- A Will must be signed free of fraud, undue influence, duress or coercion.
- Most states require that the Will be signed in front of witnesses.

These simple steps are all that is required to constitute a valid Will. Obviously, more complex estates require more care in the drafting of the document. In any event, it is recommended that individuals consult their attorneys to guard against anything that might delay the process of probating an estate. Your Will is your opportunity to carefully articulate your wishes, your values and your legacy. And we can help.