

Does Your Will Work?

Some wills won't. For example, if the state requires the signatures of two disinterested witnesses and a beneficiary of your will signs as a witness, your will may not work.

Also, a will that's out of step with your other estate planning documents may not work either. Let's say your will dictates that your entire estate is to pass to your spouse and yet your life insurance policy indicates a different beneficiary. Does your will supersede your policy and redirect the insurance proceeds to your spouse? Probably not.

An out-of-date will that fails to take full advantage of current estate tax law may not work well either. It could cost thousands in added taxes or fees. Nor can you feel confident in a will that has not been updated to reflect major changes in your family life or financial affairs.

Does your will accomplish everything you want? Is it up-to-date? Is it valid? Do you even have a will?

By creating a good will, you create good will among those you honor through your will. They will remember you for your foresight, generosity and thoughtfulness.

What Your Will Reveals About You

Your will says something about you. First, it says that you care about your loved ones. You want to make it easier for them by taking care of legal matters relating to the transfer of your estate. You want your affairs handled smoothly and without undue inconvenience to those who will be experiencing grief.

Second, having a will means that you have sought to conserve your estate. You can reduce taxes and probate costs by designating what things will go where and who will be responsible for handling the details. The cost savings that result from a carefully constructed estate plan means that more of your estate can go to family members and other beneficiaries.

Third, your will provides insight into your lifetime involvement and concerns. Bequests to family members tell of your love and concern for their welfare. And a bequest to the church speaks volumes about your values. It's amazing how often people say, "I never thought about making a charitable gift to the church through my will. It just never occurred to me."

When you name the church in your will (or living trust) to receive a specific amount or a percentage of your estate, you make one final gift -- your crowning gift -- to the mission and ministry of the church. It is a tangible way to touch hearts and change lives of people who don't know Christ, for many years to come. You declare in your Last Will and Testament that you desire to return to God a portion of the blessings God has entrusted to your care.

As you think through your estate giving plans, you may want to talk with the CNH District Estate Planning Representative, Brian Hyde. He has worked with many people concerning their estate planning and bequest plans and can explain the giving options you have. All of this will assist your attorney when you meet with him or her to discuss and finalize your will. You can call Brian at (925)245-4016.

