

Where there's a will, there's a way

December 6, 2022

Most *Baptist Standard* readers know God has a will. Most also strive to live in God's will every day; nothing is more important.

So, if you are in "God's will," is God included in yours? The Texas Baptist Missions Foundation exists to connect God's mission and your legacy. What does that look like?

For most Texas Baptists, the "gift of a lifetime" happens through a simple will. This is by far the most common and convenient way to include God's mission in your legacy. Why doesn't that happen more often?

What happens without a will

You may be surprised to learn that, year after year, two out of every three people who die in the state of Texas do so with no will whatsoever. Two-thirds of Texas Baptists who die each year have no will? Two out of three members of your church who die have not planned the stewardship of their estate to include God's mission?

It's actually tragic. When you die without a valid will, the state of Texas has a "not-so-wonderful" plan for your estate—all at a very high cost, including:

- the cost of your choices—without a valid will, you'll have no say in decisions regarding your family or possessions;
- the cost for your family—the level of stress and the degree of conflict increases radically when there is no will;
- the cost of time—settling an estate without a will typically takes

additional months or even years; and

- the cost in money—the probate process without a will can cost as much as 10 percent of the value of the total estate.

Here's a better surprise for you: The Texas Baptist Missions Foundation has made it possible for every Texas Baptist to create a legally valid will for free. Thanks to the generosity of TBMF donors, we have contracted with FreeWill to provide this opportunity. Incidentally, "FreeWill" is not a theological position; it is the price point (free) for a vital legal document (will).

Writing a will is easier than you might think

How does it work? Go to freewill.com/missionsfoundation. Using your email address and a personal password you create, you will have an opportunity to connect God's mission with your legacy; provide for your family; preserve and pass on the resources God has entrusted to you; and perpetuate God's kingdom through your church, the Missions Foundation or other Baptist causes.

You can complete the process in about 30 minutes. Then, download your will, print it and have it notarized in the presence of a couple of witnesses. It's that simple and costs you nothing.

Once you've downloaded the document, you will have access to a portal you can use to create the power of attorney, advanced directive and guardianship documents you may choose. You'll also have an opportunity to mirror your will and your spouse's.

Your will can be edited at any time using your password, and you can download the revised will, print and sign it with a notary.

There is no obligation to include Texas Baptists, *Baptist Standard* or your church in your will. But if you have faithfully supported them as a family in your lifetime, why wouldn't you bless them the same way with your estate?

Should you feel you need something more sophisticated than a simple will because of your specific situation, the exercise of completing the FreeWill not only can save you considerable time and expense when you meet with your attorney, but also will protect your family and estate until you are able to work with your attorney to replace the simple will.

Please contact [the Texas Baptist Missions Foundation office](#) if we can be of any help to you or your church.

Jerry Carlisle is president of the Texas Baptist Missions Foundation.

Disclosure: Texas Baptist Missions Foundation and Baptist Standard Publishing are ministry partners. TBMF provided a grant to the Standard for semester interns from colleges and universities affiliated with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The content of the article and the decision to publish it are not related to the grant, but resulted from a prior request for information about the importance of a will.