

'If I Only Had a Million'

"Many people are extremely generous in theory, but not in practice," said author Kent Crockett. "They say, 'If only I had a million dollars, I would give half of it away.' That is simply not true."

In his book, *Making Today Count for Eternity*, he said, "If we aren't faithfully giving even 10 percent of our money right now, we wouldn't give away half a million dollars if we had it." He gives a couple of examples:

1. In 1992, a well-known professional baseball player who had a salary of \$3 million and a signing bonus of \$1.5 million was forced to file for bankruptcy. His expensive hobbies and high standard of living had left him \$1 million in debt. Having a fortune didn't make him a capable money manager.
2. Oseola McCarty, on the other hand, washed clothes for a living for 70 years of her life. On Sept. 26, 1999, she died at age 91. Miss McCarty earned 50 cents per load doing laundry for affluent families. She deposited a little bit in a bank account each week, and by the time she retired, she had accumulated \$250,000.

"It was more than I could use," she said. She gave \$150,000 to the University of Southern Mississippi to help African-American young people attend college. What a remarkable story of diligence and stewardship!

The conclusion?

The baseball player couldn't live on \$4.5 million, but a few pennies consistently saved over the course of her life became a fortune for Oseola McCarty of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. A little bit of faithfulness over a lifetime produces the accumulated effect of great abundance, as she proved.



Bible scholar and educator Howard Hendricks said, "It's not what you would do with a million dollars, if a million were your lot. It's what you are doing right now, with the buck and a quarter you've got."

McCarty's story calls to mind the commitment and faithfulness of the associates of Life Care and Century Park who – while they may not have a million dollars in the bank – nevertheless give generously of their time, their talents and, not surprisingly, often of their money to benefit the people they serve.

They, as well as Oseola McCarty, are laying up treasures in heaven.

For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have (2 Corinthians 8:12 NIV).