

**THE COST OF INVESTING – AND NOT INVESTING****Robert J. Tamasy**

Two company executives were discussing the considerable cost of training and developing people within their organization. The chief financial officer asked the CEO, "What happens if we invest in people and they leave?" The CEO looked directly at the CFO, paused and then replied, "What happens if we don't invest in people – and they stay?"

A thought-provoking question, right? In most companies, regardless of size, some people are like dead wood – handling responsibilities, striving to meet deadlines and receiving paychecks, but not growing or becoming stellar contributors to the organization's mission and goals. There might be other factors involved, but often we simply have failed to invest in them.

We see advertisements and commercials about financial investments – how to increase one's net worth or savings for the future, especially for those approaching retirement age. However, there is probably no greater investment than to share one's time, energy and experience with other people, regardless of whether results feel like "success." It is far better to invest in people and lose some that move on to better opportunities than not to invest and become burdened with people operating well below their potential and capabilities.

It can be argued the true mark of a leader is not what occurs while he is in control, but what happens after he leaves. Does the work continue and grow, or does it stagnate or die? A dedicated leader investing in and developing people that work for his or her organization will leave an enduring legacy, whether those individuals remain with the company or leave for key leadership roles at other places.

By contrast, poor leaders leave unstable, even crumbling enterprises when they are removed from the picture, much like a house of cards. Their legacy, often because of selfishness, pride and an unwillingness to invest in others, is failure and futility.

During His time on earth, Jesus Christ invested in a handful of ragtag disciples, none of whom would have been voted "most likely to succeed." Yet when He departed from the earth, He entrusted them with His mission, one that continues to be embraced by countless millions today.

Jesus gave His followers simple instructions: "*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you*" (Matthew 28:19). And the apostle Paul, the beneficiary of a long-term investment in his own life by a faithful man named Barnabas, told young Timothy, "*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others*" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Maybe someone invested in you. Whether we lead large corporations, have our own businesses, are managers or even employees in a small department, we each have a unique, significant sphere of influence. Who are you investing in? And if you're not investing in them, who is?

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## ***Reflection/Discussion Questions***

1. Do you regard helping others to grow and develop, both professionally and personally, as an investment? Why or why not?
2. Think of someone that invested time and energy in you. Perhaps that person continues to invest in you today. What has been the value of that investment for you?
3. Does your company have an active, intentional strategy for developing its employees? If so, explain what that looks like and the impact it has had in the lives of your colleagues and coworkers.
4. Are you presently investing in someone else? If you are, what have you been doing – and do you think it has had a positive effect on that person? Could there be some benefits from this relationship for you? What might they be?

If you would like to look at or discuss other portions of the Bible that relate to this topic, consider the following brief sampling of passages:

Proverbs 11:14, 15:22, 19:20; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Isaiah 43:4; Hebrews 10:24-25