

BOOK REVIEW

The Eternity Portfolio

Book by Alan Gotthardt

REVIEW BY MARY BALDWIN, CFP®,
NAPFA-REGISTERED FINANCIAL ADVISOR

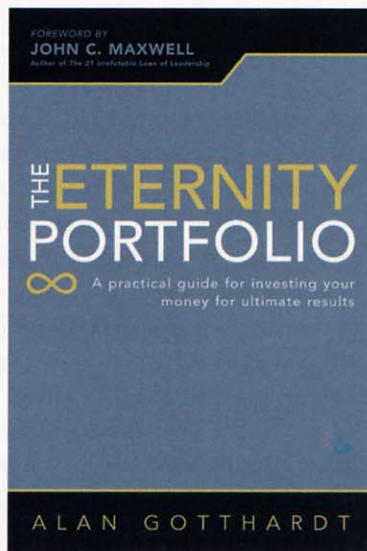
I was thrilled when I won the lottery to review this book. I've always been intrigued by the concept that there is a tradeoff between living this life and preparing for the next. I'm always searching for concrete, cast-in-stone answers that I can never find in the Bible. I won't say that I was surprised or disappointed, but I will say that this book affirmed my belief that the answers lie in our hearts and not in a book.

The Christian life is meant to be lived with a purpose. This book inspires us to create a vision—along with a detailed strategy—for making investments that last forever. Alan Gotthardt emphasizes that the concept of eternal rewards is the most profound truth that exists about money.

The Eternity Portfolio dispels the myth that investing is a game to be won or lost and reinforces the fundamentals like “it is a means to an end.” Investing should take us from where we are to where we want to go, and Gotthardt establishes that investing is simply a component of the financial strategy that you must integrate with an entire plan to be effective. The author wastes no time getting to core values and the representation of “who we are” and then immediately relates this to our vision and strategy of achieving our goals. He constantly reminds us that most of the truly rewarding things in life have very little to do with money, and that there is a connection between money given and lives changed—and this is what brings us true happiness. We are then transformed to the place where we are told that God has two

priorities for money: investing in family and investing in others.

The book quotes many Biblical verses. The concept of “Eternity Portfolio” is born when giving becomes a form of investing: in churches, ministries, and individuals that




make it up. Just as we have investment policy statements for our clients, the author suggests that this tool may also be successfully used to fund, design, invest, and monitor the Eternity Portfolio. This begins with a systematic method that is proportionate, but only after a cash flow is generated and risk is minimized. Insurance, retirement, and college funding are discussed—and with a gentle reminder that we are not guaranteed tomorrow and college is accessible for those who may pay part or all of their own way. The author believes that retirement takes priority over college so your kids won't have to support

you in your old age!

Taxes, charitable remainder trusts, donor-advised funds, and family foundations are mentioned but not in great depth. Gotthardt emphasizes that giving should be done by the living. His chapter on asset allocation defines Evangelism, Mercy & Discipleship, and emphasizes the intersection of your own personal mission with your giving plan.

One very valuable section looks at the matter of due diligence in our charitable giving. The author provides an outstanding due diligence checklist in the appendix, and it would be useful for more than just evaluating charities.

The book wraps up with consideration of how a person can transfer his or her values to the next generation. This is built on the thought-provoking question: What do you want your legacy to be?

The Eternity Portfolio is a very stimulating, well-written book that I enjoyed very much. I sincerely hope that it will be read and prominently displayed in all NAPFA members' offices. It will help our clients who have the inclination to overcome inertia and take action. This may be the book to help them create a system for giving that will bring great joy and rewards. As our author asks: What do we really want our legacy to be? 

Mary Baldwin is a NAPFA member from Melbourne Fla. This is her first book review for *The Advisor*.