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Chapter 22: Understanding and Applying Biblical Principles for Stewardship and Fundraising

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In 2003, noting that Christian organizations tended to use secular fundraising methods with little consideration of whether those practices were consistent with God's Word, Wesley Willmer convened a national task force under the joint auspices of the Christian Stewardship Association (CSA) and the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) to address this concern. The task force consisted of 23 Christian leaders including three with experience as seminary presidents.¹

The task force developed the Biblical Principles for Stewardship and Fundraising, and since then many have asked for additional help to understand how to put these principles into practice. The purpose of this chapter is to provide that assistance.

The principles provide the framework for this chapter and are comprised of ten assertions, an introductory statement and a conclusion—each of which is printed in bold below. The chapter then seeks to answer two questions about each phrase within the Principles: “What does it mean?” and “How does it apply to raising money?”

Biblical Principles for Stewardship and Fundraising

Christian leaders, including development staff, who believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and choose prayerfully to pursue eternal kingdom values (Matt. 6:19-21, 33), will seek to identify the sacred kingdom resources of God's economy within these parameters:

Christian leaders, including development staff who believe in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and choose prayerfully to pursue eternal kingdom values...

What does this mean? All leaders who affirm Jesus Christ as Lord—including pastors, teachers, professors, elders, deacons, and members of resource development teams at Christian organizations—all who believe that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the good news that God loves us so much that He sent His Son to pay the penalty for our disobedience so that we might live in communion with Him for eternity. If we believe that is true and have accepted God's gift of salvation, then we will follow the commands of Matthew 6:19-21: “Do not store up for

yourselves treasures on earth.... But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”² If we claim that Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives, then our chief priority will be to please God, not ourselves. Rather than focusing our life efforts on accumulating what is of value to us, we should focus on finding out what God values, through prayer and the reading of Scripture.

How does this apply to raising money? Christians who are in leadership positions have the sacred privilege to interact with prospective ministry partners about how God desires them to use the resources entrusted into their care. One who embraces the Gospel of Jesus Christ will actively, prayerfully, seek to learn what God wants for one’s ministry and for the ministry partners with whom one interacts. One will pursue the transformational raising up of stewards to be rich toward God that this book espouses. A Christian leader will not covet what others have, but will prayerfully ask God what He desires—both for the leader and for the ministry.

...will seek to identify the sacred kingdom resources of God's economy within these parameters...

What does this mean? Christian leaders should trust God to provide resources to further the work of His kingdom.

How does this apply to raising money? There are two major paradigms to explain raising money: (1) a marketing paradigm that considers a gift a transaction between the giver and the charity that results from the persuasion of the fundraiser, and (2) a transformational paradigm that believes one who gives does so out of a heart that God has transformed and that is generous because Christ is generous (see Haynie and Russell’s chapters). The one is human-centered, the other God-centered (see Cochrane’s chapter).

1. God, the creator (Gen. 1) and sustainer of all things (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17) and the One "who works within us to accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine" (Eph. 3:20), is a God of infinite abundance (Ps. 24:1; 50:10-12) and grace (2 Cor. 9:8, Phil. 4:19).³

God, the creator and sustainer of all things. . .

What does this mean? The Bible teaches that God is the Creator. He created “heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them” (Ps. 146:6). This is so fundamental to understanding who God is and our relationship with Him that the first verse of the first book of the Bible begins by establishing this fact: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). Because God is the Creator, He has the right and authority to demand obedience from us. And God is worthy of our worship because He created all things (Ps. 148). Not only did God create the universe, He also holds all things together (Job 38–39; Matt. 6:25-34) and promises to provide for all that his followers need.

How does this apply to raising money? If God has the power to create all things, and if God holds all things together under His authority, then God is sufficient to provide the resources needed to carry out His ministry.

God is the One “who works within us to accomplish far more than we can ask or imagine”...

What does this mean? The Holy Spirit will empower us to trust Christ enough to allow Him to live within our hearts (Eph. 3:14-19). Christ’s love for us is so great it is beyond our understanding, and by “being rooted and established in love” (Eph. 3:17) we “may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:19). Therefore, we will grow in the knowledge of His love and be empowered to trust that God “is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine” (Eph. 3:20).

How does this apply to raising money? God loves us so much that He will fully provide for us. Furthermore, as believers trust Christ enough to be conformed to His image, God will transform their hearts (see Rodin’s chapter) so they can rest in the understanding that God is able to provide far beyond what they can even imagine. The more a believer trusts in God’s loving provision, the more generous he or she will become.

God is a God of infinite abundance and grace.

What does this mean? God owns all things therefore He is a God of infinite abundance; everything He created ultimately belongs to Him yet He delights in providing abundantly for His people. As Shelley Cochrane points out in her chapter, there is no limit to God’s potential abundance. Blomberg found it significant that God declared the world He had created “good” (Gen. 1),⁴ and went on to point out that God’s intent was for His people to joyfully benefit from the abundance He created.⁵

Furthermore, God’s mere desire to be in relationship with us stems from His grace. Rodin notes: “the movement of God toward us was a movement of grace... The grace of God revealed in Christ is the hallmark of our faith.”⁶

How does this apply to raising money? If God owns all things and delights in providing for His people, then we can rely on God to provide for our ministry organizations. There is no need to trust in manipulative, transactional fundraising practices. We can trust God to provide abundantly through transformed hearts.

2. Acknowledging the primacy of the Gospel (Rom.1:16) as our chief treasure (Matt. 13:44), Christians are called to lives of stewardship, as managers of all that God has entrusted to them (1 Cor. 4:1-2).⁷

Acknowledging the primacy of the Gospel as our chief treasure . . .

What does this mean? It is Good News that we can live in an intimate relationship with the Creator of the universe because of the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. When viewing our lives from an eternal perspective, nothing else matters. Without the opportunity to be reconciled to God, we would be doomed to live a life of pain and die without hope for relief from eternal suffering. The Gospel is fundamental to our well-being: it is the most important thing we possess—it is our chief treasure.⁸

How does this apply to raising money? Nothing but the Good News of Jesus Christ is important. Our latest campaign project pales in comparison to the message of the Gospel. When development professionals raise funds for buildings, scholarships, salaries or other projects, they should remember that these are only vehicles to further the cause of God's Kingdom, not ends in themselves.

Christians are called to lives of stewardship, as managers of all that God has entrusted to them.

What does this mean? Because God is the Creator and thus the ultimate owner of all things, everything we claim to possess is not in actuality ours but God's. Everything we have is given to us by God and He holds us responsible for managing of these possessions in a manner that is pleasing to Him. As managers of God's resources we will be required to account for what we have done with what God has given us. Rodin points out that this managerial responsibility takes place within the context of relationship with God: "We are stewards under the reign of this God who calls us into fellowship with him in Christ Jesus."⁹

How does this apply to raising money? If all things belong to God, then any resources that may be given to a charitable organization in reality belong to God. Development officers may confidently present giving opportunities, recognizing that the ministry is not seeking to take anything away from the ministry partner; rather the partners are giving from what God has entrusted into their care. When prospective ministry partners consider whether or not to support a cause, they should pray and ask God if it is His will that a gift be given. Similarly, when development professionals present giving opportunities to prospective supporters, they should do so acknowledging that it is the responsibility of the prospective supporter to seek out God's will or call (see Libby's chapter) regarding His resources.

- 3. A Christian's attitude toward possessions on earth is important to God (Matt. 6:24; 1 Tim. 6:6-10), and there is a vital link between how believers utilize earthly possessions (as investments in God's kingdom) and the eternal rewards that believers receive (Phil. 4:17; Matt. 19: 27-30; Matt. 25:31-46; 1 Tim. 6:17-19).¹⁰**

A Christian's attitude toward possessions on earth is important to God.

What does this mean? When a rich young man asked how he could receive eternal life, Jesus told him to "sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me" (Matt. 19:21). Rather than following through on Jesus advice, the young man "went away sad, because he had great wealth" (Matt. 19:22).¹¹

How does this apply to raising money? Prospective ministry partners should be challenged to trust God to provide for them and to seek to be rich toward God (Luke 12:21). Supporters should be challenged to value God and following the lead of the

Holy Spirit above and beyond all things. Development professionals should also put love for God above everything else; their lives should be examples of godly stewardship and they should resist the temptation to covet the possessions of the ministry partners with whom they interact (see Morris' chapter).

There is a vital link between how believers utilize earthly possessions (as investments in God's kingdom) and the eternal rewards that believers receive.

What does this mean? In Matthew 16:26 Jesus asked, "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"

God holds us accountable for what we do with the possessions that He has entrusted into our care; we will have to report to God what we did with the resources He gave us. If we have used the resources to glorify God, we will be rewarded for doing so; if we fail to use those resources in a way that pleases God, we will not be rewarded and our very relationship with God will be in jeopardy (Matt. 25:31-46).¹² Alcorn proposed what he called "the Treasure Principle: You can't take it with you—but you *can* send it on ahead."¹³

How does this apply to raising money? Giving decisions are spiritual decisions with eternal consequences. Stewardship professionals should focus on what God can do with resources rather than on the resources themselves. A development officer should communicate (see Hoag chapter) the mission and vision of the organization and challenge prospective ministry partners from an eternal perspective. Development professionals can challenge individuals to consider what they value as stewards (see Harper's chapter) and whether or not they will hear God say, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

4. God entrusts possessions to Christians and holds them accountable for their use, as a tool to grow God's eternal kingdom, as a test of the believer's faithfulness to God, and as a trademark that their lives reflect Christ's values (Luke 16:1-9).¹⁴

God entrusts possessions to Christians...

What does this mean? God retains the rights of ownership for everything He created, but He entrusts responsibility for looking after His creation to humans: God told Adam and Eve to rule over and work and take care of what He created (Gen. 1:28; 2:15). When King David dedicated the resources had been donated for the construction of the temple, he acknowledged to God, "Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things.... Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand" (1 Chron. 29:12, 14).

How does this apply to raising money? It is the responsibility of resource development professionals to both educate and challenge Christians to think from this perspective, ensuring that believers understand that they in actuality own nothing and are merely the

managers and distributors of God's resources. All forms of communication should reinforce this belief system.

...and holds [Christians] accountable for their use...

What does this mean? As with any owner, God expects His resources to be handled in a way that pleases Him, and there will come a time when God will conduct an audit to determine whether each Christian has glorified God through the use the possessions that have been entrusted into his or her care. In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus uses the parable of the talents to teach the principle of using resources in a way consistent with the owner's expectations. Jesus goes on to describe the final judgment (Matt. 25:31-46) where each person will be rewarded or condemned based on whether he or she compassionately provided for those in need. The Apostle Paul reiterates this image, saying, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Cor.5:10; cf. Matt. 16:27, Rom. 14:10-12).

How does this apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals can challenge Christians to consider whether—at the end of time when they are standing before the judgment seat of Christ—they will feel confident that they have used God's possessions in a manner pleasing to God. Resource development professionals may also intentionally describe how support of a given project or ministry is consistent with God's expectations as described in Scripture.

...as a tool to grow God's eternal kingdom...

What does this mean? God has provided us with resources to further His eternal spiritual kingdom.¹⁵

How does this apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals can confidently challenge Christians to think of their donations as investments in God's kingdom. When Christians leverage possessions to bless Christian ministries, the profits reaped from such investments last for eternity.

... as a test of the believer's faithfulness to God...

What does this mean? Willmer suggested that how we use possessions serves as "a four-part take-home test. The test is to: (1) determine who is master of our life (2) assess how much responsibility we will be given in heaven (3) determine how faithful we were in dispensing God's grace (4) see what honors we will receive at commencement into heaven."¹⁶

How does this apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals should be more concerned about the eternal spiritual state and growth of their prospective ministry partners than they are about receiving a gift for their particular ministry. If the potential supporter appears to be more focused on the pursuit of wealth and the recognition he or she may

receive in exchange for a gift, the development officer would be wise to disciple the person toward an eternal perspective.

...as a trademark that their lives reflect Christ's values.

What does this mean? How we use our possessions demonstrates whether we are members of God's kingdom. Jesus said, "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).¹⁷

Our allegiance to Christ should be so obvious that a stranger could tell based on how we use the resources entrusted to us. When we show love to others by volunteering our time to help at the food pantry or tutor children after school, visiting the sick or those in prison, or supporting the homeless shelter ministry in our neighborhood, then our lives will reflect Christ's values.

How does this apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals should confidently encourage prospective ministry partners to consider whether they are using the resources entrusted into their care in such a way that others would be able to tell that they are believers. When generosity is a reflection of Christ in us, our character changes and people see an outward difference.

5. From God's abounding grace, Christians' giving reflects their gratitude for what God has provided (Lev. 7:11-15; 2 Cor. 9:10-15) and involves growing in an intimate faith relationship with Christ as Lord of their lives (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 12:16-34).¹⁸

God's abounding grace...

What does this mean? Scripture teaches that God gives grace to the righteous. The Old Testament Hebrew word for "grace" can also be translated as "favor, kindness, pleasant, precious" and the New Testament Greek word as "grace, acceptable, benefit, favor, gift, pleasure." Psalms 84:11 declares, "...the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless." And the Apostle Paul reminded the Church in Corinth, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich," (2 Cor. 8:9). Paul goes on to say, "God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

How does this apply to raising money? Because God's grace is given to "those whose walk is blameless" (Ps. 84:11), Christians should actively pursue a righteous life—while embracing God's free gift of righteousness since we "are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). Both stewardship professionals and ministry partners can rest in God's promise to provide all we need—and even more. Christian nonprofits can be confident that they will receive the resources to enable them to "abound in every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8). Ministry partners can be confident that if they support ministries, they will still have sufficient to pay the mortgage

and feed their families.

Christians' giving reflects their gratitude for what God has provided...

What does this mean? Paul taught that the generosity of those who give out of the abundance that God has given them “will result in thanksgiving to God” (2 Cor. 9:11): those who are recipients of generosity will thank God for His provision. Couching God’s abundant provision within the framework of “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 8:9), the Apostle goes on to exclaim, “Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (2 Cor. 9:15). The natural response to God’s grace is thanksgiving, and one way to express that thanksgiving is by giving generously. This is a voluntary outgrowth of the process of sanctification.¹⁹ The Old Testament sacrificial system assumed that the faithful would present offerings as a means of showing thankfulness to God (Lev. 7:11-15, 22:29; cf. 2 Chron. 29:31, 33:16).

How does this apply to raising money? Generosity results from a life conformed to Christ, because Christ was generous. As stewardship professionals focus on transforming hearts to be rich toward God, the believer will respond with generosity out of gratitude for what God has provided.

Christians' giving involves growing in an intimate faith relationship with Christ as Lord of their lives.

What does this mean? It may feel risky to give away some of the resources God has given to us, but when we do so we are taking concrete steps to demonstrate our trust in God to take care of us. Through giving we also acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the Master of our lives. Rather than making the accumulation of money our priority or relying on our own ability to make a living, we choose to trust and obey our Lord when we give to others. And as we grow in our ability to trust in our Lord, we develop a closer, more intimate relationship with Him.

Alcorn has said, “Gaze upon Christ long enough, and you’ll become more of a giver. Give long enough, and you’ll become more like Christ.”²⁰ He goes on to say, “Giving jump-starts our relationship with God. It opens our fists so we can receive what God has for us. When we see what it does for others and for us, we open our fists sooner and wider when the next chance comes.”²¹

How does this apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals are providing a spiritual ministry when they present giving opportunities to Christians, giving believers the chance to develop a closer relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. For this reason, those who have been called to ask others for support can do so with confidence, knowing that they are carrying out the work of the Church to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20).

- 6. Because giving is a worshipful, obedient act of returning to God from what has been provided (1 Chron. 29:10-14), Christian fundraisers should hold a conviction that, in partnership with the church, they have an important role in the spiritual maturation of**

believers (James 3:1).²²

Because giving is a worshipful, obedient act of returning to God from what has been provided...

What does this mean? Both the Old and New Testaments contain commandments to give back to God by supporting others (Deut. 14:22-29; 1 Cor. 9:14, 16:1; Gal. 2:10). At the dedication of the material for the temple, King David worshipped God, saying, “Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand” (1 Chron. 29:14).

How does this apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals can confidently encourage prospective ministry partners to consider making a gift as worship to God because the resources that believers may contribute actually belong to God. Development officers are not trying to take away anyone’s money. When a development professional asks a Christian to consider making a gift to his or her ministry, in essence one of God’s stewards is simply consulting with another of God’s stewards. Furthermore, the stewardship professional is facilitating God’s work in the giver by giving a fellow Christian an opportunity to worship God through obediently giving back to God from what God owns already.

...Christian fundraisers should hold a conviction that, in partnership with the church, they have an important role in the spiritual maturation of believers.

What does this mean? Jesus warned, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:34), and, “You cannot serve both God and Money” (Luke 16:13, cf. Matt. 6:24). The Apostle Paul wrote, “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil” (1 Tim. 6:10). Given these admonitions—along with Jesus’ command to “make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20)—it is clear that a significant role of the Church is to challenge believers to trust and serve God alone. Christian development professionals have the special opportunity to partner with the Church in this effort.

How does this apply to raising money? Because giving is a spiritual decision, and believers become generous as they are conformed to the image of Christ, Christian stewardship professionals are involved in facilitating the spiritual maturation of believers so they become generous. As they interact with prospective ministry partners, stewardship professionals often get a glimpse of both the financial situation and value system of these fellow believers. This gives development officers the opportunity to encourage and challenge fellow Christians to put their trust in God and to become generous as Christ is generous.

- 7. The primary role of a Christian fundraiser is to advance and facilitate a believer's faith in and worship of God through a Christ-centered understanding of stewardship that is solidly grounded on Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16-17).²³**

The primary role of a Christian fundraiser is to advance and facilitate a believer's faith in and worship of God...

What does this mean? The primary role of a Christian development officer is to encourage prospective supporters to grow in their relationship with Christ. Believers will become generous as they are conformed to the image of Christ. Development professionals are called to educate ministry partners regarding the biblical perspective of giving, to challenge believers who are trusting in their net worth rather than in God, and to provide a vehicle with which to worship God by facilitating and receiving charitable giving.

How does this apply to raising money? Advancing a believer's faith, as suggested throughout this book, means the organization's focus is on transforming hearts to be rich toward God. Rather than holding development officers accountable solely for the amount of donations raised, performance will also take into account their heart-to-heart discussions with prospective ministry partners. The nature of the face-to-face visit will change from that of begging or manipulating to communicating ministry needs and discerning spiritual readiness. Ministries' publications should be intentional in educating their constituency regarding the biblical view of possessions and the stewardship responsibility of every believer. Direct mail appeals should reflect the scriptural basis for supporting the ministry.

...through a Christ-centered understanding of stewardship that is solidly grounded on Scripture.

What does this mean? Christian fundraisers are called to use all relevant Scripture to educate their constituency regarding the biblical understanding of possessions and giving. Believers need to be taught that God is the ultimate owner of all things (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 24:1; 1 Chron. 29:11-16), we are the managers of God's resources and He will hold us accountable for what we do with what we have been given (Matt. 25:14-46). Christians must learn to trust in God rather than money (Luke 6:13) and understand that giving is an expression of worship to God (Lev. 7:11-15, 22:29; cf. 2 Chron. 29:31, 33:16).

How does this apply to raising money? Christian development officers must accept the responsibility to educate believers regarding biblical stewardship principles. Stewardship professionals can offer seminars on stewardship at local churches, assist pastors by preaching sermons on giving, publish articles about the biblical perspective of possessions in their ministry publications, and ensure that those within their direct realm of influence (i.e., employees, students, alumni, clients, parishioners, supporters) receive stewardship training.

- 8. Recognizing it is the work of the Holy Spirit that prompts Christians to give (Isa. 32:15-17, 34:16; John 6:63, John 14:15-21, John 15:4-5, 16-17, 26, John 16:13-14; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Thes. 1:2-6, 2:13; Gal. 5:16-25; 1 Pet. 1:2) (often through fundraising techniques) (Neh. 1:4-2:8; 2 Cor. 9:5-7), fundraisers and/or organizations must never manipulate or violate their sacred trust with ministry partners.²⁴**

...it is the work of the Holy Spirit that prompts Christians to give. . .

What does this mean? Giving is contrary to our sin nature. Jesus cautioned his followers to “be on your guard against all kinds of greed” (Luke 12:15) and counseled them to “not store up for yourselves treasures on earth” (Matt. 6:19). The Apostle Paul warned against “the love of money” (1 Tim. 6:10) and listed envy as one of “the acts of the sinful nature” (Gal. 5:19). Paul instead admonished Christians to “live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature” (Gal. 5:16), and the Apostle Peter noted that “God’s elect...[had] been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1-2). Jesus promised that He would send “the Spirit of truth [who would] guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).²⁵

How does this apply to raising money? It is not the responsibility of the development officer to convince prospective supporters to give; rather it is God at work within the hearts of Christians that will bring about gifts. Rodin says,

This should be a liberating and empowering realization. Only within this understanding can we go about our work in the highest professional manner.... Only in this context can we really have interactions with our donors that are not all tied to a solicitation and truly be at ease. We all know that successful fundraising is based on the building of good, solid, long-term relationships. This understanding of the Holy Spirit as the motivator of gifts frees us to do that job to its utmost.²⁶

Therefore, development officers should pray, trust God, and rest in Him when going about their business. Rodin notes that development officers will still ask for gifts but, “We will ask simply, honestly and confidently, and then we will sit back and watch God do great things through his people.”²⁷

...often through fundraising techniques....

What does this mean? While it is the Holy Spirit who prompts Christians to give, God often uses fellow believers involved in raising funds to facilitate the process. God instructed Moses to “tell the Israelites to bring me an offering” (Exod. 25:1) for materials to construct the tabernacle. King David challenged the leaders of Israel to donate towards the construction of the temple (1 Chron. 29:1-9). Nehemiah was bold to ask King Artaxerxes for the resources to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 1:4-2:8). And the Apostle Paul wrote an appeal letter to the Church in Corinth requesting donations for the poor in the Church in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8-9).

How does this apply to raising money? It is a balance between prayer and work. While praying for God’s provision should be a part of every Christian fundraiser’s daily life and work, God uses the process of relationship building, education, and mentoring to bring stewards’ resources into the kingdom. God tends to work through individuals to carry out His work and the Holy Spirit may well use an appeal letter, ministry update, or personal visit (with the appropriate biblical perspective) to challenge a believer to make a gift.

...fundraisers and/ or organizations must never manipulate or violate their sacred trust with ministry partners.

What does this mean? Christian organizations work in partnership with their supporters to carry out the work of God's kingdom. Ministry partners trust the nonprofit to use their gifts for God's glory.

How does this apply to raising money? Resource development professionals should always be honest with their ministry partners. It is never acceptable to claim that there is a financial crisis when one does not exist. Neither is it appropriate to use guilt as a motivation for generating gifts. Any donations a nonprofit receives should be used for precisely what the giver intends. Furthermore ministries should be wise and discrete with the gifts entrusted to them; it is inappropriate for nonprofit leaders to use donations to fund lavish lifestyles.

9. An eternal, God-centered worldview promotes cooperation, rather than competition, among organizations, and places the giver's relationship to God above the ministry's agenda (1 Cor. 3:1-9; 2 Cor. 4:16-18; Gal. 5:13-25; Phil. 4:17).²⁸

An eternal, God-centered worldview. . .

What does this mean? God has always existed and will always exist. "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty," (Rev. 1:8). Therefore God is not limited by time. God's perspective is eternal; as the psalmist said, "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. . . . For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night" (Ps. 90:2, 4).

If we are to have a God-centered worldview, we will seek to view the world through God's eternal perspective rather than focusing just on what we see before us at this present time. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). Furthermore, we will focus on God's priorities, not our organization's priorities. As the Apostle Paul exhorted the Christians in Colossae, "...set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things" (Col. 3:1-2).

How does that apply to raising money? Our individual ministries are just one small segment of God's eternal plan. While God may have called a stewardship professional to serve Him through a given nonprofit, God is much bigger than that one ministry organization. God works out His will through myriads of people and organizations, and all nonprofit ministries that have been established by God have a part in furthering God's kingdom. The stewardship professional should interact with people from the worldview that God is working to further His kingdom, and the priority is God's eternal kingdom not the organization.

...promotes cooperation, rather than competition, among organizations. . .

What does this mean? Jesus called us to be united as a body of Christ. The night before His crucifixion, Jesus gave his disciples a commandment: “Love each other as I have loved you” (John 15:12). He went on to pray that his disciples “may be one as we are one” (John 17:11) and that “those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you” (John 17:20-21). As Rodin has said, “We are now called to live as people who are one in Christ. Not ‘as if’ we were, but because we *actually are!*”²⁹ If we are one in Christ and if we are all carrying out the work God has called us to do, then we are working together to further God’s kingdom rather than competing with each other for market share or donations.

How does that apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals should shift the way they think about other Christian nonprofits (see Cochrane’s chapter). Rather than viewing other organizations as “the competition,” they should embrace them as other avenues for God to carry out His work. Furthermore, if a prospective ministry partner chooses to support a different charity rather than the one a given development officer represents, the response should be one of joy that the individual is giving to God’s work and that supporter should be commended for carrying out his or her stewardship responsibilities.

...and places the giver’s relationship to God above the ministry’s agenda.

What does this mean? From an eternal perspective, it is much more important to encourage others to take concrete steps to submit every aspect of their lives to the will of God, than it is to raise donations for a given nonprofit organization. Jesus’ final instructions to his followers before His ascension was to carry out the Great Commission (Matt. 28:16-20), which demonstrates the importance of God’s relationship to each individual.

Rodin counsels Christian development professionals to be less concerned about how much ministry partners give and more concerned with “how they give and why they give.”³⁰ He goes on to say that “the spiritual growth of our donors should be the primary concern of every Christian fundraiser! It is in this context that we should be planning our annual program of visitations, letters, phone calls, mailings, publications, and solicitations.”³¹

How does that apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals should encourage and commend a giver for supporting God’s work—regardless of which ministry is receiving the benefit—rather than seeking to discourage gifts to another nonprofit.

- 10. In our materialistic, self-centered culture, Christian leaders should acknowledge that there is a great deal of unclear thinking about possessions, even among believers, and that an eternal kingdom perspective will often seem like foolish nonsense (1 Cor. 2:14) to those who rely on earthly kingdom worldview techniques (1 Cor. 2:1-5).³²**

In our materialistic, self-centered culture Christian leaders should acknowledge that there is a great deal of unclear thinking about possessions, even among believers . . .

What does this mean? Our society values the accumulation of wealth and focuses its attention on pleasing the self rather than focusing on God and adopting His value system. One cannot love the world and love God at the same time (1 John 2:15). The world's value system consists of "the cravings of sinful man, the lust his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does" (1 John 2:16), and these are inconsistent with God's value system. Jesus said that what was most important was to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind... [and to] ... love your neighbor and yourself" (Matt. 22:37-39). As Christians who live in a culture steeped in the selfish desire to accumulate wealth, our challenge is to intentionally adopt God's value system rather than let the world's priorities rule their lives.

How does this apply to raising money? Stewardship professionals must seek a heart transformation within their own lives so they strive for what God desires. This transformation of the heart to a counter cultural position will impact both their personal lives and their ministry. As Christian leaders are actively seeking to adopt God's value system, they are called to challenge the believers with whom they interact to undergo a heart transformation as well, so that the ministry partners likewise focus their priorities on pleasing God rather than succumbing to a life of selfish materialism.

...an eternal kingdom perspective will often seem like foolish nonsense to those who rely on earthly kingdom worldview techniques.

What does this mean? This approach seems naïve and impossible to someone who does not believe God provides every need and transforms hearts. Direct marketing experts may insist that one must offer a premium to ensure a strong response in direct mail fundraising, or fundraising professionals may expound on the importance of using prestige as a motivator for joining a giving club; but Christian leaders are called to trust God's wisdom, rather than man's wisdom. From an eternal kingdom perspective, charitable giving is not a transaction, it is an act of worship as the heart is transformed.

How does this apply to raising money? If God has called a charity to fulfill a particular mission, God will provide the resources to carry out that responsibility. There is no need to rely on fundraising techniques that use sinful desires to manipulate individuals to make a gift. Rather Christians who undergo a transformation of the heart will become like Christ; because Christ was generous, they, too, will be generous. Trust God and follow His way.

When these principles are implemented, which rely on God changing hearts more than on human methods, the resulting joy-filled generosity of believers will fully fund God's work here on earth (Exod. 36:6-7).³³

What does this mean? When resource development professionals determine to carry out their work from God's eternal kingdom perspective rather than being motivated by the value system of this world, they and the ministry partners with whom they work will undergo a personal life transformation in Christ. As a result of this transformation, they will reflect Christ's character, demonstrating a life of love, sacrifice, joy, and generosity. Because of their joyful generosity,

God will provide all that Christian nonprofits need to carry out the work of his eternal kingdom.

How does this apply to raising money? Be faithful to God's ways and the resources will follow. These biblical principles serve as a guide to stewardship professionals as they seek to raise the resources required to carry out God's work. Rather than relying on the advice of secular fundraising experts, Christian resource development officers are called to rely on God and his wisdom and in so doing to receive from God all that is needed when He creates a revolution in generosity.

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² All Bible quotations are from the *New International Version* (East Brunswick, NJ: International Bible Society, 1984).

³ Additional Reference: John 1:14

⁴ Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions*, New Studies in Biblical Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 243-244.

⁵ Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches*, 244.

⁶ R. Scott Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom: Theology of Life in All Its Fullness* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 42

⁷ Additional References: Gen. 1:26-30; Matt. 25:14-46, 28:18-20; 1 Cor. 1:18, 23-24, 1 Cor. 9:23; Phil. 3:8-11; 1 Pet. 4:10

⁸ Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom*, 60.

⁹ Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom*, 56.

¹⁰ Additional References: Matt. 22:37, Luke 14:12-14, 1 Cor. 3, 2 Cor. 5:10, Eph. 2:10.

¹¹ Randy Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2001), 11.

¹² Wesley K. Willmer, *God & Your Stuff: The Vital Link Between Your Possessions and Your Soul* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002), 29.

¹³ Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*, 17-18.

¹⁴ Additional References: Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 14:22-29, 24:19-22; Isa. 58:6-7; Mal. 3:10; Matt. 6:24-33, 22:34-40, 25:14-46; Luke 12:15-34; John 13:34-35, 15:8-17; Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 9:14, 16:1; 2 Cor. 8-9; Gal. 2:10, 6:10; Eph. 2:10; Col. 3:17; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; James 2:15-16; Heb. 13:15-16.

¹⁵ Willmer, *God & Your Stuff*, 15.

¹⁶ Willmer, *God & Your Stuff*, 15-16.

¹⁷ Willmer, *God & Your Stuff*, 20.

¹⁸ Additional References: Gen. 14:20, Ezra 2:69, Luke 7:36-50.

¹⁹ Craig L. Blomberg, *Heart, Soul, and Money: A Christian View of Possessions* (Joplin, MO: College Press Publishing Company, 2000), 86.

²⁰ Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*, 31.

²¹ Alcorn, *The Treasure Principle*, 32.

²² Additional Reference: Rom. 12:1.

²³ Additional References: Exod. 34:32, 35:21.

²⁴ Additional References: 1 Chron. 28:6, 29:9; Prov. 21:1; Isa. 55:8-11; 2 Cor. 3:5.

²⁵ Blomberg, *Heart, Soul, and Money*, 107.

²⁶ Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom*, 210.

²⁷ Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom*, 210.

²⁸ Additional Reference: Ps. 90:1-12.

²⁹ Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom*, 47.

³⁰ Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom*, 212.

³¹ Rodin, *Stewards in the Kingdom*, 212.

³² Additional Reference: 1 Cor. 1:17-31.

³³ Additional References: Matt. 6:10; 2 Cor. 9:8-12.