

FUNDRAISING: A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

Nuggets of GOLD from Rick Dunham's book

"If God Will Provide Why Do We Have To Ask For Money?"

The fact is that if we are honest, we see fundraising as a necessary evil. Often we think we are begging for money. We are often embarrassed to ask people to part with their hard earned money.

The fact is that God expects Christian leaders to challenge His people to fund His kingdom work on earth. Raising money for Christian ministry is an issue at the very centre of both the spiritual walk of each Christian and the work of the church in our world today.

In his book *Waking the Dead*, John Eldredge makes a simple but powerful statement: "Things are not what they seem. This is a world at war." He goes on to explain "The world in which we live is a combat zone, a violent clash of kingdoms... You were born into a world at war, and you will live all your days in the midst of a great battle... Until we come to terms with war as the context of our days, we will not understand life".

I believe most Christians today would give an assenting nod to the notion of spiritual warfare, however, Christian leaders often fail to see their work and the work of their ministry or church in light of the epic spiritual battle going on all around us.

The battle against Satan and his forces of evil was the focal point of Jesus ministry. In fact the Bible tells us that defeating Satan was the purpose that Jesus came to earth. As John states in 1 John 3:8 "*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*" The life of Jesus was defined by the epic war being waged by the forces of darkness against God and His plan to redeem mankind.

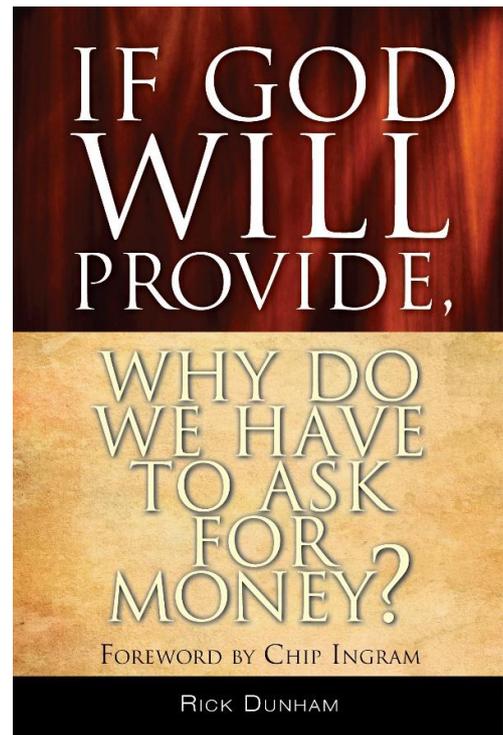
Even though Satan was defeated when Christ rose from the dead, for Him the battle continues. He is committed to destroying the offspring of Jesus... that's you and me.

Jesus told Paul in Acts 26:17-18 "*I'm sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins.*"

No matter what ministry you are involved with today, that is your purpose. God has called you to be part of His plan to free people from the power of Satan and his kingdom of darkness and bring them into God's kingdom of light.

But don't think for a moment that Satan will not put up a fight. Peter warns us in 1 Peter 5:8 "*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*" Ephesians 6:10-12 reminds us that "*Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly realms.*"

We are players in a cosmic war. We must understand that this is our reality. Now you may be wondering "what in the world does this have to do with fundraising?" EVERYTHING!!!



The spiritual war between Satan and his forces of darkness and God and His forces of light is at the core of God's kingdom work here on earth. And it's being waged on a variety of fronts. But there is one particular battlefield that is nearly always overlooked. It's a place where forces of evil are enjoying victory after victory over God's children... to the detriment of God's kingdom work. This battlefield is the funding of Christian ministry. I believe that the funding of God's work is a nexus – a focal point – that is central to the fulfilment of God's purposes in our world today. This makes the funding of Christian ministry a prime target for Satan and the spiritual authorities under his command.

Limited resources, means limited impact. If a ministry is limited in funding, it... by definition... is limited by its impact. The ability of a ministry to fulfil God's call is in direct proportion to fund its work and if the devil and his forces can thwart Christians from supporting God's work then he had won a victory in undermining the advancement and impact of God's kingdom here on earth.

The former head of Australia's Special Forces, Jim Wallace, who served for over 35 years explained that battles are not won based on tactics, but rather on destroying the resources of the enemy. One of the tasks of the Australian Special Forces is getting behind enemy lines and destroying the enemies' ability to supply the troops engaged in battle. If the enemy doesn't have fuel, bullets, food, medical supplies – all the necessary things to wage the battle – they can't fight. And they lose.

That is exactly Satan's strategy: to keep ministries from gaining the resources they need to do the work God has called them to do. How many lives have not been transformed, how many hearts have not been won to Christ... how many opportunities have been missed... because we fail to effectively fund ministry?

The responsibility to motivate God's people to fund God's work in the world lies squarely on the shoulders of ministry leaders. It is their responsibility to move God's people to financially engage in what He is doing in the world. When ministry leaders are called by God to do His work, they are also called to challenge His people to fund that work.

But why? Doesn't God already own the cattle on a thousand hills? God has chosen to fund His work on earth through His people. And He's done that for one reason... and it's not money. He already owns that. What God wants is the one thing you own and have complete control over - Your heart.

God passionately desires the wholehearted devotion of every one of His children. God's priority and passion to have those whose hearts are truly and totally His. In fact this is really at the core of Jesus' statement in Mark 12:30 *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your mind and all your strength."*

God has no greater desire than to have your whole heart! God doesn't want to be part of your life, He wants to BE your life. He wants your total and complete devotion, and He wants to be the affection of your heart.

The heart is the one common denominator of Christian ministry. Every ministry is ultimately focused on one thing: winning and growing the hearts of men, women and children so they become wholly devoted followers of Jesus Christ. The heart is the battlefield of every Christian ministry. Winning people to Christ is a transaction of the heart. And at its core, the process of discipleship is growing people in their faith... to expand their heart for God so that God will ultimately own that entire real estate (the heart).

So how does this relate to fundraising? In two ways...

Firstly, if we fail to properly fund Christian ministry, then we limit the ministry's ability to reach people to bring them into a personal relationship with God, or grow them in the faith as disciples of Christ. Which means we suffer loss on the spiritual battlefield for the hearts of men and women. That's one reason why, if you are a Christian leader, you must be bold in challenging God's people to fund His work. And its why, as a follower of Christ, you must be serious in your commitment to funding God's kingdom work.

But there is a second implication and this is the one I believe most ministries don't fully understand. When we fail to properly engage Christians to fund God's kingdom work, we fail to grow their wholehearted devotion and love for God.

Jesus Himself made it abundantly clear that our money and our heart are inextricably tied together. How we view money... what we do with money... has everything to do with whether God has our whole heart. You and I cannot be wholly devoted to God if we are not investing in His kingdom work with what He has put into our trust. Because our hearts follow wherever we invest our money! So when we as God's people fund His work, God gets what He really wants – our wholehearted devotion and commitment to Him. And your wholehearted devotion to God is the last thing that Satan wants.

Satan not only wants to undermine God's kingdom work by limiting the resources a ministry has to fund its work, he also wants to keep each believer from giving his or her whole heart and soul in service to God.

So fundraising... and the issue of giving... is indeed a critical part of the Christian life. Raising money for ministry is not really the practise of getting people to part with their hard earned money. It's getting men and women to align their hearts with what God is doing in the world today and to increase the devotion of their hearts to Him by investing in what He is doing in the world. Because that's what giving is really all about.

If Satan can keep Christians from supporting God's work, he accomplishes his top two goals in one mighty swoop. Not only does he thwart the advancement of God's kingdom, he keeps the heart of the believer from a wholehearted commitment to Jesus Christ. What a brilliant strategy!

The stakes are immense. It's vital that we as Christian leaders understand the importance of this critical battlefield and determine not to let Satan have this victory! And as supporters, we all need to understand what Satan is really up to and why our investment in God's kingdom must be a spiritual priority.

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