



## **Fundraising is not in the Bible**

God has a plan for financing everything He does, but nowhere in the Bible can we find the fundraising methods we see in modern ministry today.

I am called to build the financial base of the local church and have been doing so for twenty-six years. A proper financial foundation in the local church cannot be underestimated. Also, a proper financial foundation in the local church takes a lot longer to establish than what most ministers think, or are willing to invest. Money is always needed, especially in the beginning, and again in an expansion such as a building project.

I often see a struggle between the minister's desire to move forward and the people's willingness to give to see it happen. In our day, professional ministerial fundraisers are brought in to "raise" the money. They claim it's their ministry but that ministry is absent from the Bible. These "professionals" have many different methods they use to motivate the people to give. Some are well organized plans with specific goals and others are very loosely put together but very charismatic. The predominant thing in common is that there is a heavy emphasis upon motivating the giver by promising them a blessing in return for their giving - in other words, a financial return. However, I can't see any of this as Biblical, even though some of it "works."

These days people are seeking something "that works" rather than seeking the Truth. We live and minister in a consumerist society and "getting results" is the objective. When the results are obtained people feel they have accomplished something for God because they believe He moved. However, the Bible teaches that we are to obey what we are called to do. It does not set a goal out in front of us that if reached will prove we are doing something for God.

I minister in many churches that are having financial difficulty. I am not talking about a church that is stressed over a current project (I will talk about that later). I am talking about a church that has the members but not enough money to operate. Invariably, the problem is an improper financial base. When the base is Biblical, all the money necessary is available.

Some pastors are timid about ministering effectively concerning the presentation of the tithe. The tithe is often mentioned but there is not an adequate understanding among the people for there to be sufficient obedience among them. I ministered in one church of at least a thousand where my interpreter, a long time member of the church, did not know the difference between the tithe and an offering. This person knew both words and interchanged the use of them at will, and did so incorrectly. In my experience, if you were to ask this person if they tithe, they would answer that they do, but, they have no understanding of what the tithe is. They think anything they present to the church is a tithe **and** an offering.

Under these circumstances, just about the only way to keep the money coming in is to consistently tell the people what God will do for them if they continue to sow their seed. Statistics in the United States indicates that approximately eighty percent of church members **do not** tithe. If a minister tells these people that God will bless them supernaturally for sowing their seed, then that minister is misleading the people. God doesn't supernaturally bless those that are stealing from Him. If He does, then no one needs to tithe. It is irresponsible to lead God's people in this manner. It is not surprising that this method of fund raising has to be pressured consistently because it is not Biblical.

Building projects can be particularly stressful if not pursued Biblically. Building projects are usually the place where the professional fund raisers are brought in. The Bible has a lot to say about building fund offerings and how they are to be handled.

God tells Moses to receive a building fund offering.

*(Exodus 25:1–9 KJV) "And the **LORD spake** unto Moses, saying, **Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.** And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and*

*stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And **let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.** According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.”*

First, the Lord spoke. I often wonder how many building projects have truly been directed by God. Moses heard from God and obeyed what he heard. This wasn't a "vision" that Moses was working to fulfill. When I read about Moses I think he would have been happy to just sit on Mt. Sinai. A building project can become a severe burden if it is not directed by God.

God then directed Moses to receive an offering. Again, the offerings received have to be directed by God for God to be involved in them. God spoke to the leader and told the leader to receive an offering. Moses did not go out and hire a professional fund raiser to "bring in the money." Moses just obeyed what God told him to do. I know that is simple, but that is what God expects and works with.

I know of a pastor that heard of another pastor who used a professional fund raiser with some degree of success and so decided to use that man also. After the program ran its course, this pastor lost many of his key money people because they were offended by the fund raiser. Now, he is in worse shape than when he began. Fund raising is not in the Bible.

There is another principle at work in this account of Moses. The priests of the local house are the only people anointed to touch the Holy things presented at that house. I am not convinced that an outsider has the authority to touch the Holy things of the local house. Take a look at Deuteronomy.

*Numbers 18:8 - "And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Behold, **I also have given thee the charge of mine heave offerings of all the hallowed things of the children of Israel;** unto thee have I given them by reason of the anointing, and to thy sons, by an ordinance for ever.”*

An outside minister, although a ministry gift, is not vested in the local house. Aaron was the High Priest over the building that God told Moses to build. As a person called to minister on Biblical finances, I do not receive offerings and I do not do fund raising. I am there to assist what God is doing with the host ministry and to help lay the foundation for his ministry.

Back to Moses. God told Moses to only receive the offering from those that would give willingly with their heart. Apparently that meant that some would not give. The word “*willingly*” here in the Hebrew means: *to volunteer, to present spontaneously, to be self willing*. This means there was no “ministry” done so that these people would be motivated by a promise of them receiving a personal benefit for their giving. This giving came right out their own desire to give. Buy why?

God said to Moses, “*let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.*” These people gave willingly because they wanted God to dwell among them - that’s it, nothing else. If people are giving to a building project because of a promise of personal return on that giving, then they are not giving for the presence of God. They are giving because they think that they are going to increase by that giving. Its not about God, its about them.

We don’t build buildings because we want to have a nice place or because we want to make a statement in the community. We should build under the direction of God and because we want His presence. In this account, it was for a **tent**, a temporary structure. What God wanted was to be with His people, and, His people wanted to be with God. What a concept? The people were willing to give for that reason alone.

Look what happened. Too much stuff!

*(Exodus 36:5–7 KJV) “And they spake unto Moses, saying, **The people bring much more than enough** for the service of the work, which the LORD commanded to make. And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the sanctuary. So **the people were restrained from bringing**. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and **too much.**”*

Not many ministers have had to tell their people to stop giving. No, professionals are usually hired to “*keep it coming in.*” This account of Moses worked because God was directing it and the people wanted God. There was no promise of anything to the people other than God said that He wanted to dwell among them. They were excited about God coming.

Many times a minister enters a building project and then faces extreme challenges. We know we have an adversary at work. However, in Exodus, the adversary didn't stop the giving and they didn't even know there was a devil.

If church people are not giving willingly to the building project then they simply do not really love the Lord the way they want you to believe. Its better to make sure of your financial base before you enter a project. When you have a church filled with discipled people that have been taught to love the Lord, they will give willingly without manipulation. They won't need extreme promises and you won't need a professional fundraiser. However, God will bless His people in their giving. Realize that money comes through people so God has to bless His people to build His house. However, money is not the objective. The objective is obedience to the Lord by a people who truly love the Lord.

A foundation of love and obedience takes longer to build but it is the Biblical foundation. There is no fund raising in the Bible.

