



WHAT IS PERSONAL SUPPORT RAISING?

From the Author of *The God Ask*

STEVE SHADRACH



**5 QUESTIONS EVERY
DONOR SHOULD ASK**

Jesus left all of His followers with the charge to make Him known to all nations.

Working together as the Body of Christ, those who take the message of Christ where it is needed and those who send the messengers both receive the blessings of joining God in His work around the world.

“For ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.’ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent?” ROMANS 10:13-15

If you are presented with the opportunity to financially invest in a Christian ministry or worker, I encourage you to seriously consider it. By giving and praying, you become a strategic ministry “sender,” enabling and launching that Christian worker into their calling to focus on impacting others for Christ.

Many Christian workers all over the world personally raise the funds needed to cover their salary and ministry expenses. This approach is commonly called “personal support raising” or “ministry partner development.” The Christian worker meets with family, friends, churches or referrals given to them to share their ministry vision and extend an invitation to each one to partner with them by financially investing. This is not the method used by all ministries, but tens of thousands of organizations around the planet do utilize this decentralized approach of requiring each staff person to take full responsibility to acquire the necessary funds to do their ministry.

The purpose of this booklet is to give you more information, including the biblical basis for this funding model, and hopefully answer questions you might have. If you meet with a Christian worker and they are asking you to support their ministry, you will be better informed to respond to their presentation.

While Jesus certainly commands us to “give to those who ask of us” in Luke 6:30, He also wants us to steward well the funds He’s provided us. So as you consider whether to invest in a particular ministry or Christian worker, ask some key questions. Here are five to read and pray through.

Q1. HOW SHOULD I DETERMINE WHAT TO GIVE?

THE OLD TESTAMENT COMMANDED THE JEWS TO “TITHE,” BUT MOST BIBLICAL scholars believe that meant more than just 10%. When you add the various tithes and offerings it was 23-35% of their earnings. That might not be a well-received sermon in most churches!

The New Testament provides no percentages or commands as to what to give. Instead, we have freedom in our giving, and only principles to guide us. Jesus and the apostles taught we are to give generously, regularly, secretly and joyously, donating out of the “want to” rather than the “ought to.” Giving out of grace, rather than Law, makes me want to invest more, not less, in my church and God’s work. Pray and listen to the Lord on who to give to and how much.

Personally, my wife and I take our giving cues from Acts 1:8, where Jesus’ final command was to “be His witnesses in *Jerusalem* (our own town and church), *Judea and Samaria* (the states and regions around us), and to the *uttermost parts* (cross-cultural foreign missions).” It’s been fun to prayerfully develop this “kingdom investment portfolio,” seeking to diversify our giving by including strategic causes and workers around the world.

Q2. DOES THE BIBLE MENTION SUPPORT RAISING?

YOU MIGHT BE THINKING, “I UNDERSTAND GOD WANTS US TO GIVE GENEROUSLY to our church and ministries, but is there anything in the scriptures about Christian workers living on or asking for support?” Here’s a sampling:

NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer, but also a devout Jew who yearned to go back to his homeland of Israel to restore it physically and spiritually. In Nehemiah 1 and 2, he prays for an opportunity to talk to the king face to face to specifically ask him to provide significant resources. The king could see his passion and clear ministry plan and granted all his requests and more.

PAUL

The apostle did make tents to support himself in a few cities, but the majority of his life and ministry was funded by the ongoing donations of others. He firmly believed his ministry deserved to be supported and boldly challenged churches and individuals to get behind his work. Using illustrations in 1 Corinthians 9 like "the soldier has the right to have his expenses paid," he concludes with, "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel" (9:14).

JESUS

It's hard to imagine the Son of God lowering Himself to come to earth and actually choosing to live and minister from the ongoing financial support of us mere mortals—but it's true! Luke 8 lists some of the individuals who were continually "contributing out of their private means" to fund Jesus and His disciples. He even sent pairs of His disciples into different towns in Luke 9 and 10 to approach individuals (whom they did not know) for support before they launched their ministries. By humbling Himself enough to live and minister off the regular support of others, Jesus models and values this type of partnership in the spread of the gospel.

Q3. IS THIS A COMMON WAY FOR CHRISTIAN WORKERS TO BE FUNDED?

AN ESTIMATED 70% OF THE WORLD'S CHRISTIAN WORKERS ARE "FAITH missionaries." In other words, they aren't provided a secure monthly payroll check from a church or organization, but instead are required to raise 100% of their living and ministry expenses from friends, family, churches and others who partner with them.

The guaranteed monthly salary check is more of a Western denominational idea introduced during the past 100 years. I gladly and regularly give to my church, knowing it provides for the pastors' salaries. I also see my campus minister and missionary friends working just as hard, having just as much impact in the kingdom, and I want to value what they are doing as well. I greatly admire these men and women who feel the call of God on their lives and then willingly take this hard and sometimes unpopular road of raising their own financial support.

If one of these "called ones" has reached out to you, think about how challenging it is to contact you to request an appointment, sit across from you and share their vision, answer your questions, and then boldly ask you to partner with them by coming on their team. Seeing their bravery, confidence and perseverance often makes me want to sign on to their support teams right on the spot!

Q4. ISN'T THERE A BETTER WAY?

I HAVE BOTH RECEIVED A SALARY FROM A CHURCH AND RAISED SUPPORT through a ministry, but here are three reasons why I would actually *choose* to raise support:

THERE IS A TRUE TEAM AROUND ME.

I appreciate churches and foundations who give towards my support, but I mainly want individuals and families I can meet with face to face, stay in touch with, and share personal and ministry prayer requests with—truly a team supporting me. This person-to-person connection has a way of creating amazing bonds between workers and their supporters. God uses this whole process to give all of us greater ownership in accomplishing the Great Commission. Individual workers personally inviting potential donors to partner with them is one of God's great inventions to mobilize the Church to invest their prayers and resources in His work.

IT CULTIVATES THE HEART AND HOPE OF MY SUPPORTERS.

In Philippians 4 the apostle Paul expresses gratitude to the generous believers, then adds, "Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account" (4:17). In a sense he is saying, "I appreciate your donations, but it is God who I am trusting to meet my needs. The reason I am asking you to give is primarily for your benefit, not mine." So, if you choose to invest in a Christian cause or worker, you're actually helping yourself more than anyone, because every time you give to God's work, your eternal rewards increase. The way Randy Alcorn, author of *The Treasure Principle*, puts it, "You can't take it with you, but you can send it on ahead!"

IT'S THE BEST WAY TO MULTIPLY WORKERS AROUND THE WORLD.

This decentralized model of funding has been one of the most effective ways to multiply laborers worldwide to "make disciples of all nations" like Jesus commanded in Matthew 28. Thus, thousands of divinely called, highly motivated Christian workers each year are taking full responsibility for raising their

own personal and ministry support from their network of friends and family. Not only will many more workers be thrust into the harvest, but ultimately much more money will have been given to God's purposes, and many more people will experience the joy of giving. So really it's not about money at all. It's about God calling us to help fulfill His plans by investing our resources as He directs. Giving is the pivotal piece that connects His workers with His work. Don't miss out on this exciting opportunity!

Q5. HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO RESPOND?

"ASKING" IS MENTIONED 113 TIMES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ALONE, ENCOURAGING us to boldly ask God—and others. James 4:2 says "we have not because we ask not." We should not be offended or put off by Christian workers asking us for support, but instead strongly affirm them. Having been the recipient of many support requests myself, here are a few things I would encourage you to do:

SINCERELY PRAY TO THE LORD.

The three persons involved in every request for ministry support are you, the Christian worker, and God Himself. This illustration we call "The God Ask" depicts the critical role each plays in this process. Our lives and resources belong to the Lord, so the worker's job is to ask God to provide for their ministry funding and to invite you, the potential donor, to consider investing. Your task is to seek God's guidance to see if this person or cause is the place He wants you to channel some of the resources the Lord has provided you. So this is not a human transaction at all. No, it's about God's sovereign will and allocation of funds to fulfill His purposes on earth.

Just as the Christian worker is making "The God Ask" before they approach you, you also need to seek His guidance as to how He wants you to invest the resources He has given you.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR FAMILY.

If you are married or have children, involve them in the prayerful process of deciding if you should support this cause or worker, and how much. Involving your loved ones makes them feel a part and will build lifelong convictions in their hearts about generously giving to God’s work.

EVALUATE WHETHER YOU ARE GIVING ACCORDING TO NEW TESTAMENT PRINCIPLES.

This is not just a human endeavor of sending money to a Christian worker or organization, but it is you giving to God, freely and cheerfully returning to Him a portion of the resources He has entrusted to you. If you do it regularly and generously, the Lord will transform you, and it will dramatically affect the way you view God, money and your purpose in life.



ASSESS IF YOUR GIVING IS TRULY STRATEGIC FOR THE KINGDOM.

What opportunities has God placed before you to give? Look hard at the ROI (Return On Investment) your giving dollars are producing. Listen closely to the vision and strategy the Christian worker presents to you and determine whether you think it is worthy of your investments. God will lead you.

Know for sure the Lord could accomplish this ministry without your help or mine, but isn't it absolutely amazing He would choose us to partner with Him to fulfill His eternal purposes on earth? To be invited by the God of the Universe to join Him in this work is a privilege we should embrace completely. And locking arms with some of His choice servants around the globe has a way of giving us great purpose and satisfaction in this life—and the next!

Support Raising Solutions

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FURTHER READING

SCRIPTURE

- Matthew 6:19–24
- Acts 18:1–5
- Romans 15:20–24
- 2 Corinthians 8:1–15
- 2 Corinthians 9:5–15
- Philippians 4:10–20; 1:1–9

BOOKS

THE TREASURE PRINCIPLE • RANDY ALCORN

Jesus encourages us to store up treasures for ourselves—but to store them in heaven rather than on earth. “Our money” is actually God’s money, and we can manage it in such a way that we can experience the freedom and pleasure of joyful giving. In this short but powerful classic, Alcorn never guilts the reader, but instead offers practical advice on how to cheerfully give, and shows how joyful giving brings God maximum glory and us maximum pleasure.

SERVING AS SENDERS • NEAL PIROLO

The standard of missionary care since its initial publication in 1991, *Serving as Senders* teaches the reader how to care for missionaries while they are preparing to go, while they are on the field and when they return home. Pirolo gives practical advice in six areas of care that a team or individual can provide to full time mission workers. In 2011, Pirolo released an updated edition, entitled *Serving as Senders Today*.

THE GOD ASK • STEVE SHADRACH

This resource is based off of the principles found in *The God Ask, A Fresh, Biblical Approach to Personal Support Raising*. Learn more about *The God Ask* and other personal support raising resources at SupportRaisingSolutions.org.

SUPPORT RAISING SOLUTIONS is a ministry championing biblical and relational fundraising to Christians worldwide. View more biblical and practical resources on personal support raising including articles, resources, podcasts, and trainings at SupportRaisingSolutions.org.



DR. STEVE SHADRACH and his family have lived and ministered on support since 1986—and love it! Steve is the Global Ambassador of the Center for Mission Mobilization (CMM), which sponsors the SRS Bootcamps and Support Raising Solutions resources. He has trained thousands of Christian workers from more than 500 organizations around the world how to launch their personal ministries and raise their support. A former pastor and missionary himself, Steve has a Doctorate of Ministry in Church and Para-Church Executive Leadership. He and his wife Carol have five grown children and reside in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Find this resource online at SupportRaisingSolutions.org/5Questions, or its companion, [5 Keys to Personal Support Raising](http://SupportRaisingSolutions.org/5Keys), at SupportRaisingSolutions.org/5Keys.



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